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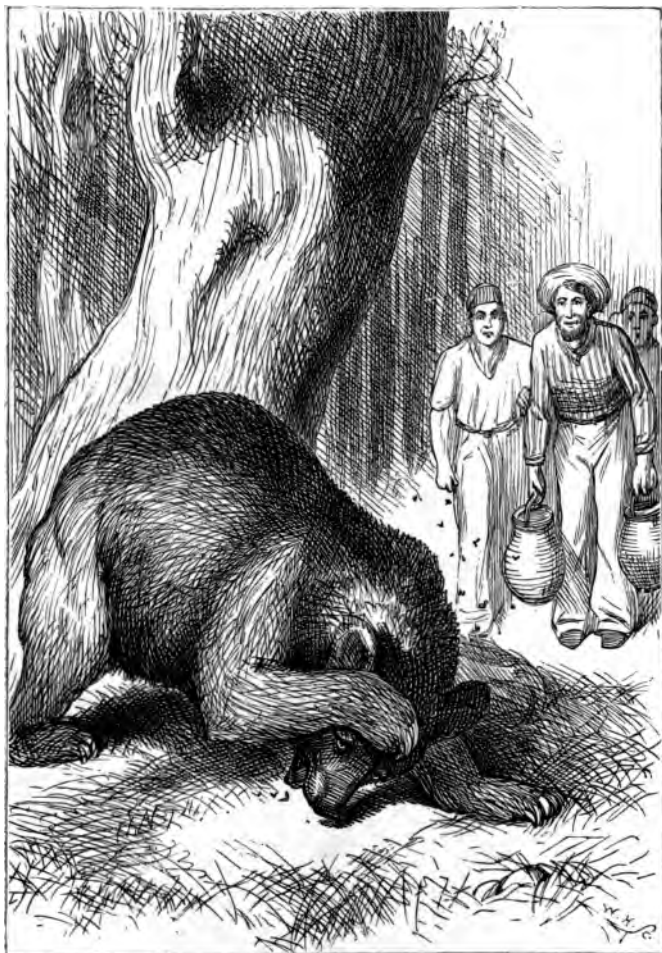


# HARTY THE WANDERER

FAIRLEIGH OWEN







**"ONE . . . DASHED A JAR OF WATER OVER THE BEAR."**

# *HARTY THE WANDERER*

OR

## CONDUCT IS FATE

A TALE

By FAIRLEIGH OWEN

AUTHOR OF "RITTER BELL," "STEYNE'S GRIEF," "ADEN POWER," ETC.

WITH TWENTY-EIGHT ILLUSTRATIONS BY JOHN PROCTOR

"Our acts our angels are, for good or ill,  
The fatal shadows that walk by us still."



GRIFFITH AND FARRAN  
CORNER OF ST PAUL'S CHURCHYARD LONDON

1879

251. c. 724.

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## CONTENTS.

CHAP.	PAGE
I.—THE PICTURE BOOK . . . . .	1
II.—OLD PETER PRANKS . . . . .	12
III.—PETER'S STORY.—THE STORM . . . . .	24
IV.—THROUGH FIRE . . . . .	36
V.—THE CRICKET MATCH.—MIRIAM . . . . .	47
VI.—MAGIC MUSIC . . . . .	59
VII.—AN ADVENTURE . . . . .	71
VIII.—MAKING AMENDS . . . . .	80
IX.—IN THE WOOD AT MIDNIGHT . . . . .	94
X.—FOUND IN THE POND . . . . .	106
XI.—A DISCOVERY . . . . .	119
XII.—ON THE TRACK . . . . .	134
XIII.—THE DESERTER . . . . .	150
XIV.—DOLLY AND THE BEAR . . . . .	163
XV.—AFLOAT ON THE OCEAN . . . . .	174
XVI.—SAM THE CABIN BOY . . . . .	184
XVII.—IN SAVAGE HANDS . . . . .	195
XVIII.—RESCUED FROM DEATH . . . . .	205
XIX.—DELIVERANCE . . . . .	214
XX.—A FRIEND IN NEED . . . . .	224
XXI.—A LOST TREASURE RESTORED . . . . .	233
XXII.—HOMEWARD BOUND . . . . .	243
XXIII.—IN THE OPEN BOAT . . . . .	252
XXIV.—“I SAW HIM DIE” . . . . .	264
XXV.—ON BOARD THE “BONNY BLINK” . . . . .	275





## LIST OF FULL-PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS.

	PAGE
"ONE . . . . DASHED A JAR OF WATER OVER THE BEAR" <i>Frontispiece</i>	
"THEN YOU WON'T?" . . . . .	148
"HARTY WAS LED AWAY" . . . . .	208
"BUT HARTY WAS AGAIN INSENSIBLE" . . . . .	280

AND TWENTY-FOUR SMALLER ONES IN THE TEXT.





## HARTY THE WANDERER.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### THE PICTURE-BOOK.

“ You hold the book, and I will turn over the leaves.”

“ Oh ! you may hold the book too, if you like, Harty ; only do tell me all about the pictures.”

“ Of course I will tell you, Dolly ; only the worst of it is, just the pictures I like best you don’t care about.”

“ Yes,” returned Dolly, laughing ; “ and those I like best you say are ‘ rubbishy.’ So that makes it fair, doesn’t it ? ”

But her brother did not laugh. He was so intent upon a picture in the book they were looking over.

It had been given to them only that morning, and was full of pictures of all sorts, beautifully coloured. The brother and sister were sitting on the grass-plot, under a shady old tree, which kept the full heat of the summer sun from off their heads. All round were sweet flowers, and the birds were singing in the trees ; while the

tinkling of a brook over the pebble stones, outside the garden hedge, was just faintly heard. It was very delightful.

Harty bent over the book a long time, with his eyes fixed upon the picture; as though he could never take them off.

"Isn't it grand?" he said at last, drawing a deep breath.

"Well, now," said Dolly, who had sat very patiently all the time, though she had not enjoyed looking at the picture, "that is one I don't care about!"

"What! not that splendid ship with her sails set, and the waves dashing, and rolling up to her sides?"

"But look how dark the sky is!" said Dolly, rather sadly; "and presently, perhaps, there will be a storm, and the beautiful ship may be dashed to pieces!"

"Nonsense! why, the sailors will take in the sails, and make all snug, and she will ride out the gale, and get into port safe enough."

"Yes, but suppose it did not get into port safe—suppose father and mother were in it?"

"Well, they will be, some day."

"I wish they were in that very ship coming home now!" said Dolly. Her smiling little face was grave as she spoke. "Do turn over, Harty, to another picture!"

The boy lingered still over this one.

"I do love sea pictures, and ships too." He turned the leaf, rather reluctantly, as he spoke.

"There!" cried Dolly, "that is a beauty! Oh, Harty, you do like that, don't you?"

It was the picture of a lovely garden, with a number of children playing. Swings, leaping-poles, cricket-bats, balls, and skipping-ropes; every kind of game and amusement seemed to be there. In the midst was a large tent, where a long table was set out with fruit, cakes, bowls of milk, curds and whey, and other delicacies.

"It is a school treat, I guess," said Dolly.

"Or a birthday party," observed Harty. "I say, look, Dolly, see that dog standing on his hind legs to be fed. Isn't he just like Bannock?"

"So he is," replied Dolly; "oh, don't turn over just yet, Harty, I haven't half looked at it!"

"There, you see!" exclaimed her brother, "now you want to be such a time over this, and you did not care for that grand old ship. She is worth all this put together.

"Go on, then," said Dolly, who was a most unselfish little soul. "I can look at it another time. But what makes you call a ship 'her' and 'she,' Harty?"

"Why, sailors always do."

"But you are not a sailor."

"Ah! but I shall be some day."

"Aunty says you are to be a doctor."

"I know better, though. Besides, there are doctors in ships."

"Oh, that is a lovely one!" cried Dolly again, as the

turning of the leaf disclosed a brilliantly coloured scene of a fairy tale, all jewels and glitter, and sparkle.

"I don't care twopence for that!" said Harty scornfully, "that isn't like anything real that ever you saw. I like *real* things!"

"But see that funny little fellow flying, with a lighted torch, and all glittering with fire-flies."

"I shall see fire-flies, real ones, in India," said Harty.

"But you are not going to India!" cried Dolly, in a tone of dismay.

"I am," said Harty decidedly, as though it was all settled. "I am going all over the world, when I grow up."

"You will wait till father and mother come home."

"Of course I shall," returned Harty, as he turned the leaf of the book. Dolly said no more. The prospect of her dear parents' return more than compensated for the possible absence of her brother, dearly as she loved him.

"Here's a camel!" was Harty's exclamation. "The 'ship of the desert' they call him. Look at his patient old face. See, there is one kneeling down, to have the load put on his back. I do like camels. Would you be afraid to ride up there on his back?"

"Indeed I should," replied Dolly, who was this time interested in the picture as much as her brother.

"Ah! that is because you are a girl. But I have often dreamed I was riding on a camel, and an elephant too; and I was not a bit afraid."

"You did scream out in your sleep once, though," said Dolly.

"It wasn't then," returned Harty, rather testily. "That was when Bannock came and put his cold nose against my cheek. You would have screamed, to be woke up like that."

"Perhaps I should," replied Dolly. "Why was he called Bannock first of all, do you know, Harty?"

"Yes, aunty told me. When he was quite a puppy he was so fond of the bannocks, cakes made of oatmeal, that they used to make at the farm. He would actually climb up on the settle, and pull a hot bannock down from the table, and run away with it into the yard, and there gnaw it all to pieces. So they called him 'Bannock.'—Here's a picture of some hunters. Look at their guns, and the big boots! I shall go hunting some day, I know."

"You are always thinking of going away, or doing something a long distance off, Harty," said Dolly sadly.

"Well, I can't always stop at home here, can I?" asked the boy. "Girls stay at home, boys must go out and see the world."

"I wish only that father and mother could be at home!" responded his sister with a sigh.

"Aunty says, father would be so very glad to come home, if he could."

"Now let us go on with the pictures," said her brother, for he knew that talking of their absent parents was apt to make Dolly a rather gloomy companion. And though

they did not always agree in some things, brother and sister were very affectionate, and would do anything to spare each other pain.

Their names were Dorothy and Harold Winwood. When very little, they had been called Dolly and Harty, as being more easy for them to say, and now they were grown to the age of thirteen and eleven, no one ever thought of calling them anything else. Harty was the eldest, and was very fond of advising and directing his sister, as though he was sure of always knowing best. But Dolly, in her wise little way, often showed him where he was not right; though it generally ended in Harty having his own way, Dolly was so gentle and loving, and had a habit of looking up to her brother, who, to do him justice, would have run any risk to protect and take care of his little sister, whom he dearly loved.

Their parents had been in India many years. The children were born there, but the heat of the country had kept them so weak and delicate, that they had been sent to England when very young, with an aunt who promised to take care of them till their own dear father and mother could return for good. They lived with her, in a beautiful little cottage in the midst of a lovely part of Devonshire, and had grown up so strong and rosy, no one would have thought they could be the same children who were brought away from India, because they were thought to be almost dying.

Harty could only just remember the voyage to England,

Dolly was quite a baby, and had no idea of any other life than the quiet and peaceful one they passed with their Aunt Charlotte in her pleasant cottage, with its delightful garden, and the wide-spreading fields, and shady woods, that lay all around. But her brother was far from being so contented. He was never happy unless listening to or reading tales of travels and adventure, hunting lions, living with wild Indians, or sailing away in search of foreign countries. These were his favourite themes, and as poor Dolly never ceased to long for her father and mother to be with them again, it is easy to suppose how she shrank from the idea of her brother going from her, and leaving her without any companion. For though Aunt Charlotte was as good and kind as it was possible to be, still she could not sit and talk for hours, and roam over hill and dale, as Harty and Dolly were accustomed to do, in the long summer evenings, when the brother came home from school, and Dolly's lessons with Aunt Charlotte were over for the day.

Mrs. Winwood, the children's mother, often wrote to them long letters, giving an account of the many strange and wonderful things to be seen out in India. There had been talk lately of father and mother coming home to live; and every letter that arrived the children opened with eager haste, hoping it might contain certain news of the time being fixed, when this joyful event was to take place.

To-day was a half-holiday, the book was a present from



a dear friend of Aunt Charlotte, who was fond of the children, and often showed them kindness. Neither Harty nor Dolly would have cared to look at the pictures alone, but with each other the pleasure was complete.

Dolly was turning over the leaves now, and suddenly they both uttered a cry of delight.

"There is a beauty!" exclaimed the little girl, and her brother for once agreed with her.

It was a picture full of sunshine. The blue sky, and the sea almost as blue, were glowing in a warm summer radiance, brighter even than that which shone over their heads; and beyond, the shadow of the great tree made the fields and gardens glitter in the heat. Yet the people in the picture did not seem to mind it. They were brown and sun-burnt, as if they had been all their lives accustomed to it; and they must have enjoyed it, for some were dancing merrily to the sound of music, played by two lads, who piped away. You could almost fancy you heard the music, so natural it looked. In another part of the picture were men and women, boys and girls, gathering grapes, and the large baskets of purple fruit were piled up high, and looked, oh! so tempting in the sunlight.

"Isn't it beautiful?" said Dolly.

"Don't you wish we were there?" cried her brother. "Wouldn't we have a feast? Oh, Dolly, look here! this one has been feasting; look at his face, look at his mouth, all dyed red with the juice."

"And look there, at that little baby kicking up its

heels in the corner! See, it has pulled over a basket of grapes, and they have half covered him up. Won't they be smashed though, Harty, and spoiled?"

"There are so many, such heaps and heaps of them," said her brother, "they don't mind some being spoiled."

"And fancy, when aunty bought those for us, when we were ill, she had to pay a good deal, I know," said Dolly.

"Yes, because they come from such a long way off. Mustn't it be nice, though, to live in a country like that, where you can gather as many grapes as you like, ah! and figs too. I should like to be there, so would you, Dolly."

"Yes, if father and mother were there too," returned his sister. "Would we have to go in a ship, Harty?"

"Why of course we must go in a ship, if we go out of England at all. Isn't this country an island?"

"Oh, of course, Harty, I know that. Water all round."

"Well, then, we must go in a ship to get to any other country. But it would not be far."

"What place is this?" asked Dolly, lingering over the picture, which was indeed very lovely to look upon, with its blue sea and cloudless sky, its green vines, and distant mountains, closing in the landscape.

"It is Italy," replied Harty. "I know the grapes grow there, and in Spain too. But that is Italy, where the organ boy came from, who had the monkey; don't you

remember, Dolly ? and we gave him an apple, and how he chattered, and the cat was so frightened at him."



"And how Bannock barked at him, till the monkey jumped on to the boy's shoulder and shook his tiny fist at him." Dolly laughed at the recollection. "Wasn't he like a little ugly old man ?"

"Where is Bannock ?" asked Harty, looking round

at his sister's mention of their old favourite. "I haven't seen him since dinner-time," and he began to whistle.

"I wonder he shouldn't be here in the shade," said Dolly. "Poor Bannock does not like the heat, and this is the very coolest place in the whole garden."

"Ah, but sometimes he goes to lie under the dairy window," said Harty, "that is cooler still, and he is near the water too if he's thirsty. Bannock ! Bannock !" and again Harty whistled.

"He would sooner be with us, I believe, than in ever such a shady place," said Dolly; "but perhaps he has followed James with the cart into Clumpton."

At that moment there was a sharp quick bark at a distance, then nearer, and nearer, as if a dog were running very fast.

The garden gate swung to with a click, there was the sound of a foot on the gravel, and again the joyful bark of the dog Bannock.

"Anybody at home?" cried out a shrill, piping voice.

"It's Pranks!" exclaimed Dolly.

"Jolly old Pranks!" cried Harty, springing up to his feet, and letting the picture-book fall to the ground.

"Here's Bannock come to tell us," laughed Dolly, as a thick-set, shaggy dog came bounding towards them, with a joyful bark, as if he were the bearer of news.

Harty darted off, Bannock beside him.

With a low whine of delight the dog seemed to echo his young master's cry of pleased surprise.

"Old Pranks has come, Bannock, aren't you glad? Come along, Dolly!"

He was off. Dolly, picking up the picture-book, and smoothing its leaves, prepared to follow her brother, with a smile on her face, though at a more sober pace than Harty, who did most things with a rush.

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## CHAPTER II.

### OLD PETER PRANKS.

WHEN Dolly reached the porch, there indeed stood Pranks, the pedlar, who had just lifted his heavy packs from his shoulders, and, with his hat in his hand, was wiping his forehead, and seemed very glad to have got into shelter out of the hot sun. Harty was jumping with joy, and already beginning to peep into the corner of one of the packs. Bannock sat near, lolling his tongue and looking foolish, for he had run himself off his legs, and barked himself hoarse, in welcoming his old friend Peter Pranks.

A servant girl ran out when she heard the pedlar's voice, and a farm lad, who had come to the cottage with a message, was added to the little crowd. All were speaking together.

"Have you brought my tape and stocking yarn?" asked the girl; "and my knitting-pins, Master Pranks?"

"I do hope you haven't forgot what you was to get for me this time, master," grinned the lad.

"You'll tell us some more stories now, Pranks, won't you?" shouted Harty; "and, oh! I have got a beautiful picture-book to show you."

Dolly stood still, just outside the porch, half-laughing at the commotion, and pitying the poor man, who had been toiling along the hot, dusty roads with a heavy load, while she and her brother had been sitting so quietly in the shade, and found it hot even there.

"Harty might let him rest a little," she said to herself.

But at that moment Aunt Charlotte, who had heard the noise, and guessed the cause, came out to the front door. At the sight of her, the servant girl and the lad drew back.

Aunt Charlotte spoke very gently, but firmly. Everybody minded her, for she was always right, and never out of temper. "Go to your work, Jessie," she said; "you will have plenty of time to buy all you want before Pranks leaves. Reuben, give this note to your mistress, and make haste back home. I daresay Peter will see you to-morrow, when he comes to the farm. Harty, I am ashamed of you, crowding round so! Don't you see how tired and hot your old friend is? Let him come in and rest, and have some tea, before you begin to chatter."

Harty looked rather ashamed; and, to make up for his want of thought, he tried to shoulder one of the pedlar's packs, to carry it into the house, but he found it far too heavy for him to lift.

Aunt Charlotte led the way, and Pranks followed her, carrying his load, to the clean comfortable kitchen, where he had enjoyed many a hearty meal; and, with a sigh of relief, he seated himself in the cool corner by the open window, where the honeysuckle smelt so sweet, and the soft breeze fanned his hot brown face.

"Thank you, ma'am, you are very good," he said, when Aunt Charlotte had seen that he was supplied with a comfortable meal. Bannock had stationed himself by the pedlar's side, resting his head upon his knee, and now and then licking his hand and eating a bit of bread or meat, which Pranks gave him, with great relish. Aunt Charlotte had told the children to go into the garden, while the pedlar ate his meal in peace. But Harty had found his way round to the window beside which Peter sat, and was holding a conversation, as he leaned his arms upon the sill and looked in.

"Bannock doesn't forget you, does he?" said the boy. "See, he won't leave your side, even to come out here."

"No, Master Harty. There's nothing like the memory of a dumb animal. You may grow out of recollection with some of your fellow-creatures, or sickness may alter you, or poverty maybe, but the dumb creatures don't forget you."

"And yet Bannock was quite a puppy when you brought him here, wasn't he?"

"He was so, Master Harty; quite a baby dog, and I picked him out from a lot of baby-dog brothers, and he

was the finest of the family; and he has grown up to be as fine a creature as his grandmother was before him. And she was a faithful good animal as ever was. Poor thing! it was her faithfulness that cost her her life."

"How was that, Pranks?" asked Harty, with eager curiosity. "I never heard of that. Do tell me!"

Peter Pranks laughed—a good-tempered, pleasant face he had. No wonder the boys called him, "Jolly Old Pranks." "I'm in for a story-telling now, I suppose, Master Harty," he said; "but I promised the good lady, your aunt, to let her see what I have in my packs as soon as I had finished my tea."

"Have you quite finished?" asked Harty, very hospitably.

"Well, I can't eat or drink any more," said Peter, laughing, "so I suppose I have about finished."

He rose as he spoke, and went out to the lobby, where he had left his packs. Harty ran to call Dolly, who was with her aunt.

"Pranks has quite finished his tea, aunty," said Harty, rushing in. "He says he can't eat or drink any more, and he wants to show you his packs, and then he is going to tell us a story about Bannock's mother—his old dog, you know."

"Take breath, Harty," said Aunt Charlotte; "and then ask Peter to bring his packs in here."

They were sitting in a shady little parlour, that opened on to the garden, where Aunt Charlotte was most fre-



quently to be found, with her knitting, or a book ; where she heard Dolly her lessons ; and where, when they were very good, the children were permitted to bring their toys, or books and paint-boxes, to keep their aunt company.

Harty rushed off to tell the pedlar, and Dolly began to clear the tables and sideboard ; for she knew when the packs were opened the numerous things that were brought to view soon filled every available place, and Dolly did enjoy looking at the pretty articles of all kinds which Peter always had with him.

In places like Sherway—which was the name of the village where the children lived—there are no shops, except those that sell all ordinary articles of food and domestic use, such as meat, bread, vegetables, and brooms, brushes, and firewood ; and the pedlar, Peter Pranks, was a very welcome visitor.

He carried two good-sized boxes, one behind and one in front, slung over his shoulders with strong straps. These boxes were fitted with a number of drawers, all filled with things which everybody requires at times. There were needles, cotton, pins, tapes, buttons, pen-knives, scented soap, sticking-plaster, hair oil, tooth brushes, pens, ink, writing-paper, envelopes, copy-books, account-books, blotting-paper, pencils, scissors, housewives, knitting-pins, wool, yarn, slate pencils, fishing-tackle, seals, sealing-wax, beads, perforated card, dolls' shoes, and babies' shoes, spoons, forks, combs and

brushes. Indeed, I could never enumerate all the things which filled the drawers of the pedlar's pack. And besides the useful articles, he had toys; dolls and dolls' clothes, balls and tops, and a microscope, and books with pictures and tales, paints and brushes. Every time he came he brought something fresh, and he took the orders of those who wanted anything brought from town. So it may be supposed that the pedlar was eagerly looked for. Everybody put off buying what they needed till his visit. "Peter Pranks will be here next week, or the week after," they would say; "then he will, perhaps, have what we want, or he will get it for us." If a new pinafore for baby, or a pair of boots for Bobby, or new music for Miss Annie, or a pair of scissors for mother, were wanted, Pranks would take the order and get them, and bring them on his next visit.

He generally came the first week in each month, though; if the weather were very bad, or he had made a longer round, he might be later. But he always found a welcome, and in that he was a fortunate man. This time, as well as the two boxes, Peter carried a large bag, which was rolled up, and strapped on the top of the box on his back. He unrolled it when he had come into the parlour, where the children were with their aunt.

"Here is the calico, ma'am, that you ordered, and there is the lace, and this is the pattern of the cloak, that you were saying you would like."

"Oh! that is very kind of you indeed," said Aunt

Charlotte. "I really had not expected you would be able to get that for me when I spoke of it. Indeed, I had not thought about it again."

"I like to oblige where I can, ma'am," said Pranks, in his squeaky voice, which had made the children laugh at first, but they were now accustomed to it. Pranks was such a big fellow, and had a fine brown face, tanned by the sun, and such a bushy beard! It did seem odd he should have such a small squeaky voice, like nobody else's that was ever heard.

When Aunt Charlotte's orders were settled, Pranks opened his drawers.

"Dolly," said her aunt, "go and tell Jessie to come in. She likes to see pretty things as well as we do, and there may be something she wants."

Away ran Dolly, and Jessie was not slow to follow her to the parlour.

Just as she was coming back from the kitchen, Dolly heard a shout of delight from her brother. She hurried in.

The pedlar had opened a drawer which seemed filled with pictures in wood, cut out and gaily painted. He took up one of a ship with its sails set, sailors climbing the masts, the captain on deck, with two midshipmen, gold bands round their caps, and all just like life. Underneath and round the little ship were green and blue waves. Hartly had uttered the cry of delight when he saw the toy. But when Pranks, taking a key from his pocket,

wound up the toy, at the back, like a clock, when the ship rocked to and fro, the sailors climbed the masts and furled the sails, and the captain raised his arm, and the middies took off their caps—then the boy could not contain himself. He actually clapped his hands, and almost yelled with pleasure.

The pedlar had other mechanical toys. He took them out, and set them going. Soon the table was covered. There were servant-girls sweeping rooms, nurses with babies which they danced up and down, monkeys racing over poles and up trees, huntsmen on horses leaping gates, and jugglers throwing balls and spinning plates on knives—all these were set moving, and they whirled, and spun, and worked, and jigged, till nobody could help laughing, and even Aunt Charlotte was amused. Dolly knew not which was most delightful, and Jessie quite forgot to ask for her knitting yarn, in her amazement at these novel exhibitors.

But Harty saw nothing, or at least cared for nothing, but the ship. When it stopped, as it did after about ten minutes, he begged Pranks to set it going again. Then all at once he darted from the room, and presently came down with his money-box.

"Aunt," he said, "please open this for me; you have the key. I want to buy the ship."

"My dear," said his aunt, "you were saving to buy the new cricket-bat and wicket."

"Oh! but the ship is so much better. I must have

the ship. It is like a real one. Please, aunt, I *must!*"

Aunt Charlotte looked grave.

"It is always ships with you, Harty. I wish you would take an interest in something else."

"May I have it?—may I buy it?"

Harty, in his eagerness, had caught up the little model, and was clasping it to him so lovingly that Dolly burst out laughing.

"You know I never hinder you from buying what you please with your savings," said his aunt. "Of course, if you have enough money, you can purchase it. What have you chosen, Dolly?"

"This farm-yard, with the little girl feeding the chickens," said Dolly. "See, when it is wound up, the cock flaps his wings, and the turkey-cock opens his bill; one could fancy hearing his 'gobble, gobble;' and look, aunty, the girl lifts her hand, and the chickens put their heads down, just as if they were picking up the corn. I think it is so pretty."

"Master Harty has chosen the most expensive toy of the lot," said Pranks.

The box was opened, and then, alas! when the money was counted, there was not nearly enough to pay for the ship. It was so much larger and better made than the others, that the price was nearly double.

"Oh, Harty, do have something else!" urged Dolly.

"This mill, with the miller and his men, all going up the steps ; or the farm-yard, or the hunting."

But Harty would have none of them. He had set his heart upon the ship, and nothing else would please him.

Then Dolly whispered to her aunt. But aunt shook her head, though she kissed the little girl for her generous proposal ; for Dolly had wished to give up her own toy and put the money to Harty's, so that he might purchase the coveted ship.

But Aunt Charlotte was sensible. She did not wish that Harty should always have his own way, and have all things made smooth to meet his desires. Dolly had been very good lately, and Aunt Charlotte intended that she should have some little reward.

"There is nothing to be done, Harty, that I can see, but to save your money, and buy the ship next time Peter comes. You will keep it for him ?" Aunt Charlotte said, turning to the pedlar.

"Of course I will, ma'am," returned Pranks, as he proceeded to shut up his pack, Harty having reluctantly yielded up the coveted toy.

"Eh ! master, if you had seen as much of ships as I have, you would not be so set upon them," said Pranks, in his piping little voice.

Harty looked up eagerly from the money he had been counting over again, as if he could make it come to more.

"Have you been at sea ?" he asked.

"Ay, that I have, Master Harty, once too often!" replied the pedlar.

"Oh! do tell me about it," cried Harold, his disappointment, for the time, forgotten in the anticipation of a delight he had before experienced in listening to a tale of adventure.

"May we hear the story, aunty?" asked the boy, while Dolly looked eager.

Aunt Charlotte was accustomed to the request. Peter Pranks was famous for his stories, which made him as welcome among the children as the drawer of sweets which was somewhere in his pack. Everybody who knew the old man respected him. He had been well taught, and was honest and kind-hearted.

"Yes, go and sit in the porch," replied his aunt. "Peter, you are going to sleep in the village?"

"Yes, ma'am, at the old place. I have had a bed there just upon forty years whenever I come this way."

"I shall see you in the morning again," said Aunt Charlotte.

The children went with Pranks to sit in the porch, where the sweet breeze now made all cool and pleasant. A nightingale sang in the old copper beech, the roses and syringa smelled deliciously where they sat.

Old Pranks looked out at the quiet scene. "You have a lovely home, Master Harold," he said.

"Harty is always wanting to go away travelling to strange countries," said Dolly.

Peter shook his head. "No place like home," he said. "I found that when it was too late, and I had no home to go to."

"Now for the story!" cried Harty.

And Pranks began.

"I was born and brought up in a village on the sea coast."

"Will it be about the dog, too?" asked Harty; "about Bannock's grandmother?"

"All in good time," answered Peter.

"Bannock, hearing his name mentioned, pushed himself into the group, and lay down at the pedlar's feet.

"I was fond of the sea when a boy," Peter went on.







### CHAPTER III.

#### PETER'S STORY—THE STORM.

“My father had been a fisherman. I could just remember him sailing off in his boat to the herring fishery ; and it was like in a dream I recalled the great shining nets, full of silvery fish, and the rejoicing when there had been a good ‘take,’ as it was called ; for my father and his boat had both been lost at sea, one stormy night, when I was a very little fellow ; which was what had given my poor mother such a dislike to the sea, no doubt, and made her do all she could to discourage the taste I had for it.

“We lived in a cottage, some distance from the village ; it stood all by itself, in a little bay, out of sight of the boats on shore ; though when the fleet was out to sea we had a fine view of their white sails, with the sun glinting on them. My mother, grandmother, and myself lived there, and our living was earned by the making and mending of nets for the fishermen.

“If my mother could have got a livelihood any other

way she would not have stayed there, so near the scene of her great trouble ; but she could not turn her hand to anything else. She and my grandmother were both very clever at the net-making, and they taught me. I liked the work, and soon was quicker at it than either of them. So we made enough to live very comfortably.

“ My grandmother was a good scholar, she taught me to read and write, and do a sum ; that was all the schooling I ever got. And indeed, I fancy, once knowing that much, a lad can teach himself most things if he has a mind. At any rate, these are the first stepping-stones to all the rest.

“ I was fond of reading ; all my own spare money was laid out in such books as I could get at the market town, where I went for my mother once a week. I always chose those that told about foreign countries, and would read them to my mother and grandmother of nights. I know they would rather my mind had been given to any other kind of history ; but they did not like, I suppose, to thwart me.

“ However, I never went so far as to propose leaving them, though my very heart longed to be afloat on the sea, sailing away to those foreign countries I read of. I had been several trips with the herring fleet, and knew the whole duty of a sailor, as far as that went. But the mere fishing trips were, compared to the voyage I longed for, like a walk round this garden, Master Harty, might be, compared to my wanderings in the journeys I take

now-a-days. The garden's more safe, and more lovely, and more restful every way. But I was young and foolish, and wanted to see the world, I suppose."

Dolly looked at Harty. But his eyes were fixed wide upon Pranks, whose words he was eagerly taking in.

"So when, one day, my father's brother, my uncle that was, came to see us, from the seaport town where his ship lay, and after making my mother and grandmother a fine present, turned to me, and asked me what I was 'going to do with myself?' for, as he said, I was growing a big lad—I looked at my mother, for I did not like to speak out what was in my mind.

"'He is longing to be a sailor!' said my mother, with a sigh, poor soul.

"'The best thing, too,' said my uncle, slapping me on the back. 'He has the making of a good one in him, or I am mistaken. Say the word, my boy, and you shall sail with me.'

"'Speak up, Peter,' said my grandmother. 'We will not stand in your way. If it is to be, so be it.'

"Then I spoke the truth; how I had always longed to sail away to foreign countries; and then I began to run on about the fine things I would bring home to my mother and grandmother, and how comfortable I should make their home with the money I should earn.

"'We are comfortable enough, Peter,' said my mother. 'We would rather have you near us than all the wonders and riches you could bring; but we must not stand in

your way. God bless and keep you ; better go with your uncle than with strangers.'

"So it was settled, and I went. Our first voyage would last nigh upon a year and a half. But the time would soon pass, I said to myself, as I should be so busy, and I looked forward to my coming back full of wonderful tales to tell, as good as those I had read out of the books at home, and I meant to save all my money for the dear mother. More, a good deal than I could have made at net-making in double the time.

"Still, my heart felt very heavy as we weighed anchor and set sail, and when the land faded from my sight, and I thought of my dear mother and grandmother, as I had last seen them, standing at the door of the cottage, waving their hands to me ; when I pictured to myself the long evenings, how they would miss me and my books ; and how many, many weeks and months must pass before I could see my home again, and the dear, good faces I had loved all my life—well, I could have fairly cried, only I knew my uncle and his sailors would set me down as childish, and quite unfit to sail with them on a real voyage.

"Ah ! children, it is when one leaves one's dear home one learns how to value it."

"But the foreign countries," cried Harty ; "did you see them ?"

"Ay, indeed," resumed Peter, "I saw enough of those. Master Harty, I have been to China, and seen

the fellows with the odd pig-tails and small eyes, and the ladies, Miss Dolly, with feet no bigger than your doll's there. I have gathered oranges from the trees where they grow, and bought as many figs for twopence as would load you, Master Harty, to carry. I have been where the parroquets fly wild in the woods, gleaming about like pieces of beautiful coloured velvet in the sunshine. And in the woods, too, where the monkeys spring from bough to bough, or hang down from a branch by the tail, twisted round it, to and fro, to and fro they swing, and drone and chatter to themselves. And perhaps a rustle, soft and stealthy, among the leaves, will make you look close, and a great, green snake, with eyes like precious stones, goes gliding away. Well you did not tread on him unawares, or it might cost you your life, for his bite is poisonous."

"Have you eaten fresh cocoa-nuts?" asked Dolly.

"Oh, yes," replied Peter; "and delicious they are too, very different from what you buy here, and the milk is so refreshing—in those hot countries better than all the wine or beer."

"Have you ever seen a bear?" asked Harty.

"Ay," answered Peter, and he laughed. "I remember once on an island, where we had put in for water and fresh fruits, we came upon a poor old brown bear in a dreadful strait. He had disturbed a swarm of wild bees—bears are very fond of honey, you know, Miss Dolly—and the bees had swarmed out upon the robber.

They had settled upon his eyes, his nose, the under part of his paws, every part not protected by the creature's hair was covered. He roared, and rolled himself over and over to get rid of them; but they stuck to him, and stung him dreadfully.

"One of our party, a thoughtless fellow, dashed a jar of water over the bear, which put the bees to flight; and the brute, on his legs in a moment, came roaring towards us. You may be sure we got out of his way pretty quick, for we had no gun with us. But I fancy old Bruin was too sore, and half blind with the stings he had got, to notice us. He went stumbling away into the woods, roaring as he went, and we saw no more of him. That was the time we picked up a beautiful little ring-tailed monkey that had its leg broken by a fall from a tree. We took it on board. Our doctor set the leg, and the little thing got well, and grew so fond of the doctor, it would follow him all over the ship. It was quite amusement to us all to see its funny tricks, and the fancies it took to different things and people."

"Did you see any savages?" asked Harty.

"Plenty of natives. It is hardly fair to call them savages, when they are as gentle—many of them—as a child, and as kindly disposed as the best of Christians. Poor things! many a bad turn is played them by the sailors and those that, being well taught, should know better. But their love of finery is very laughable. Fancy, now, a big black fellow in an old crinoline, a faded pink

bonnet, and a big parasol. I have seen plenty of them in such cast-off finery; and they would strut up and down, and bow and curtsy to each other, and seem as happy as could be. You would think they were making fun, and taking-off the white people, but they are not. They enjoy finery; and in that they are no more ridiculous than civilized folks. I remember one native young



woman who had got hold of an old cocked-hat, an officer's sash, and a pair of epaulettes; she had rigged herself out in these, and was as proud as any young lady going to a ball in silk and diamonds. But an old crinoline or an umbrella was especially coveted. One man, I recollect, had found, or been given, an odd skate; this he hung round his neck by the leather strap, as you might a horn to blow, and the way the others seemed to look up to him was amazing."

Harty and Dolly laughed loudly at this description.

"They are silly things," said Dolly.

"But they know no better," put in her brother.

"Well, after all," said Pranks, "I don't see that they are much worse than some civilized people, who do load themselves with heavy shining stones and metal work, and such things. I never saw the fine ladies and gentlemen going to Court, when I was in London, all decked out with feathers, and gold lace, and so forth, but I thought of the poor natives in Australia. But I must get on with my story.

"Our voyage lasted a year and nine months. We were coming home, and had fine weather so far, when in the Channel the storm arose. It was fearful! Nothing you ever read, or could imagine, would give you any idea of its violence. The wind roared, the waves thundered upon the deck, till one could not hear a voice, though one man would shout close to another's ear. The sea rose in monster waves, higher than our top-masts. It seemed to touch the sky, and blot out the very sun. It grew so dark, every lantern was lighted, and blue fires burned fore and aft. Higher and higher rose the waves; and faster and faster they dashed. Two men were washed overboard, and our lights were put out. We were in total darkness. Between the howling of the wind, and the booming thunder of the waves, you heard the cries and screams of the women and children among the passengers.

"Then the hatches were fastened down, to keep the water from pouring down below on the people, in the cabins. They were in darkness; they thought every



moment was to be their last. Some screamed, some prayed; oh! it was awful!

"But our gallant ship rode out the storm; and, as morning dawned, the sea grew calmer, the sky cleared, and the wind lulled somewhat, though it still blew a gale, and the waves were still dashing over our decks. But the worst was past.

"As we sailed swiftly on, we saw signs of terrible wrecks; some vessels had gone to pieces, and sunk with all on board; others were left mere logs, their masts and sails torn away. One poor fellow, drifting on a broken spar, we picked up; and though we thought he would die at first, he revived, and lived to be a dear friend to me, and a great man too, in his way.

"It was a blessed thing to see the sun break through the clouds, and the wind gradually lull down, and the sea grow calm. The poor passengers, who had thought never to see daylight more, as they came up on deck uttered a hearty thanksgiving. Only one poor woman was in tears. Her baby had died, in a fit, in her arms during the night. Then there were our two sailors, good fellows they were; we had lost them, without so much as a chance to help them—they had been dashed overboard.

"But we were nearing land and home, now; and our grief could not last, with the prospect of seeing friends and dear old England once more."

"Had you a lot of pretty things for your mother?" asked Dolly.

“Ay, you may be sure of that, Miss Dolly,” said Pranks—yet his look was very sad. “Many a time I had blamed myself for ever leaving her; for I had thought much in my lonely watches; and I made up my mind to take her to a new home, away from the sea-coast, and set her up in comfort, in a little shop may be; and if she wished it so much, I would stay ashore with her. I had made it all out in my own mind. Ah! well—I was so sure. But man proposes, and God disposes!” Old Pranks shook his head.

Dolly looked at her brother, and he in turn gazed at the pedlar. What was coming now? Peter went on,—

“We got in safely enough, and you may be sure I did not lose any time in hurrying off to the village where our cottage was. It all seemed so small, and toy-like now, to me, who had seen places of such grandeur and size. But it was home; and the nearer I got to our spot, the faster my feet seemed to fly. On the beach I saw terrible signs of the gale, which our ship had weathered. Here a broken boat, there an oar snapped in two, now a tattered sail, there a figure-head driven ashore. I thanked God in my heart that I had been spared to return and gladden my dear ones. I hastened on. I turned the corner of the rock, which framed in the little bay. Here I knew I should see the cottage; and I fancied how I should surprise them, by rushing in, and throwing my arms round

my mother's neck. I stopped short. There was no cottage to be seen! The greater part of the beach was hidden; the water reached nearly to the rocks. Where our cottage had stood was one rolling mass of water! I cried out, with a great cry! What had become of my home? Then I thought of the terrible storm. The wind had fearful power on this coast. The sea had risen in its might, and had overwhelmed the poor little cottage; and the two poor helpless women had perished! I thought, in a moment how it had all come to pass, and like a flash it came into my mind. If I had been there, I might have saved them."

The old pedlar stopped, his voice broken and full of grief.

Dolly took his hand, pitifully holding it in both her own. "Poor, poor Peter!" she said softly.

Harty laid his face on Bannock's head. Perhaps it was to hide a tear starting in his eye, for boys do not like to show they are touched by a story; though this was a true one.

In a few moments Pranks continued,—“I turned back to the village; suddenly I thought, there must be some who can tell me how it happened. I was going slowly along the beach, my heart weighed down by grief, and my arms laden with the gifts I had brought for my friends. Some children, who had recognized me, ran to a group of men, who were mending a boat. The men rose, and came hastily towards me. They saw by my face

I had learned my sad misfortune ; and, wishing to comfort me, one called out before they reached me, ‘ Courage, Peter, my lad ; we did our best—we saved *her* !’ My heart leaped up with sudden joy. My dear mother was spared, I cried out, and ran forward.”





## CHAPTER IV.

### THROUGH FIRE.

"I DID not wait to hear more," Peter continued. "The men called to me to stop, but I hurried on, following the children, who, I saw, were running eagerly, looking back every now and then to see if I were coming. I know they must be running to the cottage where there was some one to tell the news to, that I had returned.

"At the door where they stopped, I too stopped, then without a moment's pause I rushed in. The children were before me, I heard them crying out, 'Here she is, Peter! here she is.'

"I cast down my burthen at the door. I darted forwards to throw my arms round the form I saw sitting in the chair by the fire.

"A voice called out, 'My boy, my dear Peter.' It was my poor old grandmother! For the moment, so great was my disappointment I uttered a cry of dismay. I had so hoped, so believed, it was my dear mother who was saved! But the next moment I had my arms around

her, and was kissing the poor wrinkled face, which was lighted up with joy at my return ; and the next she began to weep for the daughter she had lost.

“ ‘ Poor Mary, your dear mother, Peter, she was downstairs, she was carried away by the flood. I was in bed, and the boat saved me. Oh ! it would have been better, if it had pleased God to take me, and leave your dear mother.’ ”

“ I soothed her as well as I could. Then they told me how it had happened. When the waves had overwhelmed our little cottage, my grandmother was washed out, bed and all, to a small cleft in the rocks where for a brief time it had rested ; and had been found by the good fellows who had ventured round the bay with their boat, knowing the peril in which the cottage would be placed in that fearful storm, with the wind blowing to shore.

“ They found my poor mother’s body when the waters went out, and had buried her in the little churchyard beside my father.

“ I went to see the grave. I planted it with the flowers she had been fond of. That was the last thing I could ever do for her in this world. I made up my mind to do now what would have pleased her if I had done it earlier, give up my sea-life, and settle down to make a home for my poor old grandmother.

“ She was only too glad to leave the place where she had suffered so much. So we went to live in London.

And of course I had to find out how to get my living. Guess now, Master Harold, what I turned to next."

"A baker," said Harty.

Peter shook his head.

"A butcher—a coachman—a drover," Harty guessed, as Pranks shook his head in answer to each.

"My sailor training would not have fitted me for either of these," he said.

"Perhaps," put in Dolly, "you sold fish, as you knew all about it when you were a fisherman."

"Not a bad guess, Miss Dolly," returned Peter, with a smile. "But it was not that. I became a fireman."

"A *fireman*!" cried Harold, with amazement, "what did you do that for!"

"Well, you see," Peter replied, "there is a great deal of climbing up ladders and scaling walls, and clambering over roofs, dangerous places sometimes, where you can only just get room to hang on by your finger-tips. And it needs a man who can climb well, and will not grow dizzy when he is on a height. Most of the firemen have been sailors at some time, or at any rate brought up to the sea.

"So I was glad enough when I got the chance to join the fire brigade."

"Did you like it?" asked Harty.

"Well, Master Harold, in one way I did. It was a life of excitement and risk, which, being young and daring, I did not mind at all. Still there were such awful scenes

of misery. Poor creatures burned out of house and home; left without a rag to their backs, or their tools, even to a day's work. Some had lost their children, or parents, or friends, in the fire. Some badly burned, so that it seemed as if death would have been a mercy. Ay, my heart has often ached to see the sights we did. Yet, of course, there was a dash and a daring in the life. When the telegraph bell would ring out, and we started to our feet, and in three moments were ready with our engine; and away! away! tearing along the road like the wind, towards where the red fire shone out on the sky like a rising sun.

"Everything on the road clearing before us, the people shouting, 'Here's the engine!' the crowd opening to make way for us. Up to the blazing fire, through flames and sparks, and falling timbers, and sheets of water, we dashed; each man trying to out-do the other in deeds of daring, saving life, or property!

"Then the fire-escape up to the windows, where some poor frantic creatures would be in their night-clothes, shrieking, and clasping their hands. Up we would go, and bear them down in safety on our backs. And such shouts from the crowd; such blessings on our heads from those we had rescued! Oh! yes, Master Harty, there was a bright side to the life, though we often got terribly knocked about ourselves, and saw our friends perish before our eyes, without being able to save them. Like when a wall toppled right over, on top of the finest fellow



in our ranks, and crushed the life out of him there and then."

"Did you ever save any one from a fire?" asked Dolly.

"Well, yes, Miss Dolly, I was so fortunate as to save a little girl once, some such another as yourself. It was a hotel, and, of course, nobody could say for certain how many persons were in the bedrooms. The house was old, a great deal of woodwork, as old houses mostly are; it burned like a bonfire, and before we got there every room was in flames. One of our fellows had brought out a lady, a foreigner. She had been half suffocated with the smoke, and not speaking English, made it more difficult to understand what she said. She came to herself very slowly, and as she raised herself up, she looked round with eyes that seemed starting from her head. 'Ma fille, ma fille,' she shrieked out, and waved her hands towards the blazing house. The people round did not understand. They thought she must be delirious, and tried to hold her, when she sought to get away from them, and seemed trying to make for the burning hotel she had just been saved from; screaming all the while, 'Ma fille!' Now I had picked up a little French in my travels, and in a moment I guessed the truth. I rushed up to her, and by signs and a few words, asked 'Where?' She pointed to the room from which she had been taken, and clasped her hands, and threw herself on her knees before me. 'Ma fille!' she

cried. I knew she was asking me to save her daughter. 'I'll try for it,' I said, and in I went. Our fellows roared at me to stop, the roof was falling. They told me so afterwards, but I never heard them. In I went. The smoke was blinding; the fire I never felt. I knelt down and crawled on my hands and knees. I felt for the bed. Sure enough there was the dear little creature lying quite still—suffocated, I thought. I pulled her on to my back, blankets and all. I crawled to the stairs up which I had come, but the flames had caught them, and I looked down into a great pit of fire. Then I crawled to the window and smashed the frame-work. As I appeared at it, the crowd below set up a great shout. Some of our men were already there with ladders, but none would reach the window where I stood! I did think then we were lost, but swift as light came an idea into my mind. A tall tree grew a few paces from the house, I leaned out, and, making a speaking-trumpet of my mouth, I hallooed to my mates what to do. My voice was not the poor penny trumpet it is now, Master Harty, I *could* shout in those days. Half-a-dozen of them rushed to the tree, as soon as they understood me. They pressed it so that the topmost boughs came just within my reach. I pulled the ends of the blankets tight, and knotted them fast round my waist. Then I laid hold of the twigs, which I could only touch, and drew the bough close to the window. So I managed to scramble out. Oh! Master Harty, that was a perilous climb, if ever there was one. Slowly,

from bough to bough, with my precious load on my back, I came. The crowd held their breath—even the poor French lady ceased to scream. As my feet touched the earth, a great shout broke out, and the flames burst from the window of the room we had left.”

Peter stopped for a moment.

“Was the little girl alive?” asked Dolly, almost breathless with the excitement of the tale.

“At first we feared she was dead,” replied Peter, “but she rallied. And, oh! the joy of that poor lady. It was her only child. She was very grateful. She would have given me half the money she possessed, I believe; but I did not want it. This watch I was pleased to have, and have kept it ever since, though it is many years ago now.”

“I should like to be a fireman!” said Harty, as he drew a long breath.

“Oh, Harty!” cried his sister, with a look of dismay.

“It must be fine to save people like that.”

“Ah!” said Peter, “but for one you can save you may see hundreds burned. Indeed, it is a hard life, and a risky one, Master Harold. A man may be injured for life, and never do much good. I will not deny but the fireman is very necessary, though he would not be so much wanted if people would only be careful with their candles and fires. You were asking me about poor Bess; that was Bannock’s grandmother,” the pedlar went on. “She was the fireman’s dog. She slept with the engines; she followed them to the fire. In and out, wherever the

men went, there went Bess. And she knew when there was a human being left in a building on fire. She would give us no peace, but bark and whine, and race round the place, and cry, almost like a Christian, until the poor soul was rescued, or until the animal knew, as well as we did, that help was impossible. Many a life has Bess saved by her perseverance and instinct that way. Poor thing! as I told you, she came to her death by her faithfulness. Though she seemed to belong equally to all of us, Bess had really a master. He had been captain of his own vessel, and by some misfortunes had come to be badly off, and so joined the brigade. He was a brave, good fellow, and we were all attached to him. He had saved several lives, and had two or three medals. Bess was devoted to him, and followed the very look in his eyes, much less his word, like a written law to a human being. One night we were at a dreadful fire. A large public-house was in flames, and we had all our work cut out in keeping back the foolish people, who would try to go in to save their money and valuables. Natural enough, perhaps, but what is the use of perilling their life for worldly goods! We had got the fire under, and were resting a few minutes, when the cry was raised that the stables had caught. The horses had been brought out, as every one believed, but it came out that in two boxes, at the far end, a couple of valuable animals still remained. The place was blazing. More than one of our fellows had attempted to break through the flames, but had been driven back. All at

once, the horses raised that terrible cry, which no one can forget who has ever heard it, when the creature is terrified. 'I can't stand it!' cries Captain, as we always called him; 'I'll have the poor creatures out!' He rushed in. Another moment, and two of us would have followed him, when there was a terrific explosion. Sheets of flame and sparks lighted up the place like day. The spirit-vats had ignited. We drew back in horror, with a groan that came from the heart of all. We knew our brave comrade must have perished. Suddenly there was a wild yell, and something black shot past us, right into the midst of the fire, upon the track where the Captain's feet had passed but an instant before. It was Bess, whom we had left, as we thought, snug with her puppies in the straw of the engine-house. Unseen, she had followed us, and, missing her master, she had rushed upon his footsteps to her death."

"Poor, dear Bess!" said Dolly, as she patted the head of Bannock, who returned the caress by licking her hand. "Thank you so much for the stories, Peter."

"Yes, thank you," added Harty. "Were you a fireman long after that night, Peter?"

"No, I fell and broke my leg; then I had fever, and when I recovered I was lame, and had lost my voice. I was not fit for much. My old grandmother had been dead some time, so I had no proper home. I bought my packs, and have been a wanderer ever since. My leg got better; I don't feel it much, and can walk

miles without tiring. My voice, as you hear, has never come right."

Peter rose as he spoke, and looked at his watch—the handsome gold one the French lady had given him.

"It is getting late," he said; "I must be going."

The children again thanked Peter Pranks, and, bidding him good-bye, they ran in-doors, where Aunt Charlotte was anxiously awaiting them, as bedtime was very near.

"Such capital tales as Peter can tell!" cried Harty, "and every bit true, aunty."

"I will tell aunty about poor Bess," said Dolly.

But it was too late for any more story-telling that night, and, after bidding Aunt Charlotte good-night, the brother and sister went off to their beds.

Dolly at least was soon in hers, and soon sound asleep.

But Harold was restless. He was turning over in his mind all the pedlar had told them. Now he recalled the storm, with the roaring winds and the dashing waves. Then he thought of the fireman's life—the rattling engine, the sheets of flames, the hapless people calling for help from the windows.

"Suppose," he said to himself, "this house were to be on fire, I wonder how we could get out—Dolly and I?"

Dolly's little room was next to that of her brother.

"The mountain-ash grows close to this window," thought Harty; "I wonder if I could get into it from here, and so knock at Dolly's window and save her and myself. How fine it would be!"

He lay thinking, and fancying, till he almost persuaded himself it would happen.

"I must just look out and see how near it is," he said to himself.

In a moment more he had slipped out of bed on to the floor. He quietly stole to the window, and raised the blind. But the night was dark, and he could not see the tree distinctly. He lifted the window cautiously, but, careful as he was, it squeaked somewhat.

"The tree is farther off than I thought," he said, half aloud. "I wonder how near Peter's tree was!"

He leaned from the window.

At that moment a bright light flashed over the lawn in front of the house.

Was it fire!

Then there was a loud knocking at his bedroom door.

Harty gave a cry of alarm.





## CHAPTER V.

### THE CRICKET MATCH AND MIRIAM.

AN evil conscience makes cowards of us all. Harty sprang into bed, not stopping even to close the window. Then the door of his room opened, and Aunt Charlotte entered. Harty was quaking under the bed-clothes, fearful of he knew not what. "The window open!" exclaimed Aunt Charlotte, "that was the noise I heard! What is the meaning of it, Harold?" The boy knew his aunt was displeased when she called him Harold. He peeped out very humbly, "I was only looking into the garden," he said.

"Looking into the garden!" repeated his aunt; "and after you were undressed! What reason could you possibly have for getting up again to look out of the window? You must have been to bed, for it is more than an hour since you and Dolly came upstairs. Tell me directly what you were about!" His aunt had closed the window, and now sat down by the bedside. Harty knew she would insist upon an answer; so, very



much ashamed, he told how he had been thinking over the tale Pranks had told of the fire, and how he had been looking to see, whether, in case of the cottage being on fire, the tree could be made available as a means of escape. "You are very silly, Harty," said his aunt, "to run the risk of catching cold, leaving your warm bed just to look at a tree. You would see much better by daylight. Now, if you have said your prayers, as I hope you did before you lay down, just go to sleep quietly, and think no more of fires, or anything else to-night."

She kissed him, and was quitting the room, when Harty said,—

"What was that bright light that went all across the garden, aunty, just before you came in?"

"I suppose it was the light from my lamp as I passed by the staircase window," replied his aunt; and, bidding him once more good-night, she left him.

Harty was soon asleep and dreaming of fires and wrecks, and poor old Bess, the faithful dog, all mixed up together.

The children were up betimes to see the pedlar start on his journey again, for he always came to the cottage, to get his orders for things he was to bring with him when next he came.

"Don't forget my ship," said Harty, when they said good-bye to Peter Pranks at the end of the lane. They had gone so far with him, and Bannock followed them.

"Never fear, Master Harty," returned Peter, "I'll keep it for you, safe and sound."

"I shall have the money ready by the next time you come," said Harty. "Will it be a month?"

"Not quite so long, maybe," replied Peter. "My leg feels more stiff at times than it used to, and I want to make my journeys shorter."

"I am glad of that, I shall have my ship the sooner," said Harty.

"And you will tell us more stories again?" said Dolly.

"Yes, miss, that I will, with pleasure," said the pedlar. And again he bade them good-bye, and went on his way.

The children stood and watched him, till he was out of sight; then they raced with Bannock home to breakfast. Before they had finished, a visitor called; it was Freddy Fairbairn, who had been a school-fellow of Harty, until his parents went to live so far off, that he could not attend the school. Harty had been very sorry to lose his school-mate. The boys were very much attached to each other, and to spend a day together was one of their chief pleasures. This morning Freddy brought great news. There was to be a cricket match in the field behind Mr. Fairbairn's house. Freddy and his brothers were to play. He had come to beg a holiday for his friend, that he might join them. Harty was off his chair before Freddy had half told his news.

"Sit still, Harty, finish your breakfast," said his aunt.

"Dolly, hand some cake to Freddy, and pour out some milk." Freddy had breakfasted, but his walk had given him an appetite. He took the cake and the mug of warm new milk gladly.

"There are two tents in the field," he went on with his description. "One has a blue flag for the blues, and the other is yellow for the yellows. And there is a band of music, and refreshments, and lots of flowers in our tent."

"That is the Blues, isn't it?" asked Dolly.

"Yes," answered Freddy; "how did you know?"

"I guessed," returned Dolly, smiling, "because you have a blue tie on."

"Yes," said Freddy; "and isn't it funny? you have a blue ribbon in your hair, just as though you were a Blue."

"I must have something blue, mustn't I, aunty," said Harty, "as I belong to Freddy's side?"

"You looked blue last night, Harty, I think," said his aunt, "when I caught you star-gazing at your bedroom window, silly boy!"

They laughed at this. Harty looked rather foolish.

"Have you looked at the tree this morning, to see how near it is to the cottage?" asked his aunt.

No, indeed; Harty had forgotten all about the tree and the tale which had made such an impression on him. This news of the cricket match had driven it all out of his head.

"I wish I had my new bat, though!" Harty said, as

they rose from the breakfast-table. Freddy had promised to go with him to the school to ask a holiday of his master. While Aunt Charlotte wrote the note, the boys strolled out upon the grass-plot. Harty began to tell his friend something of what he had heard from Pranks.

"I don't think any one could climb out of that window into the tree there," said Freddy; "I know I should not like to try."

"Ah! but if the fire was all blazing and roaring behind you, and there was no other way," returned Harty, "you would be glad to try any chance."

"Perhaps I might," said Freddy, "but I would rather not."

Just then Dolly came running up from the flower-garden.

"Here's something blue and pretty too," she said gleefully.

She held in her hand a large bunch of forget-me-nots, as blue as blue could be.

"You shall both have some," she said, and was beginning to divide them.

"Oh! they will die directly in the hot sun," said



Harty; "besides, boys don't wear flowers. I must have a ribbon on my straw hat."

Dolly looked disappointed.

Freddy Fairbairn saw the smile on her pretty little face fade out, and he felt sorry.

"Will you please give me some of them?" he said; "we have not any in our garden. I know my mother and Annie would be glad of some. They are coming to our tent, and I was to ask your aunt to bring you, Dolly."

The little girl's face brightened up again.

"That will be nice!" she said. "I'll run and ask aunty. You can take all these, Freddy; I shall gather some more for us to wear this afternoon."

Away she ran, and soon returned with the news that Aunt Charlotte would come. She brought her brother's straw hat, on which her busy little fingers had fixed a smart blue ribbon, one of her own. Then their aunt came into the garden, and gave into Harty's hand the note she had written to the schoolmaster, asking a holiday.

"I will come to the field in the afternoon," she said to Freddy, "and Dolly will come with me, when our lessons are done. We cannot all afford to play holiday, you know."

Then the boys set off.

"Dolly is a dear little thing!" said Freddy. "She might have a holiday too, though."

"Oh!" said Harty, with an air of importance, "girls' lessons are not much—Dolly soon gets over hers."

They did their errand at the school. Harty was generally diligent, and in favour with his master, so leave was easily obtained, and the boys, who were in the hot school-room at their lessons, envied him not a little when they saw him with Freddy Fairbairn, and guessed what was his destination; for the cricket match between the Blues and the Yellows had been talked about at Shirley a good deal.

When they were on their way again to Freddy's home, the friends began to talk about Peter's story.

"Shouldn't you like to go to sea?" asked Harty, with his usual enthusiasm in the subject.

"No," said Freddy, "I would rather be a farmer or a miller. "I do like to go round the fields with my father, and see the corn shooting up out of the black earth—it does look beautiful and green—and day after day getting higher and higher, till it begins to turn yellow, and when it tops your head, and the wind rustles it along, just like sea-waves. Then there is harvest-time—isn't it jolly?"

"Yes, but it can't be always harvest-time," said Harty.

"Well, but there's hay-making and apple-picking, and nutting, and sheep-shearing, and—and—oh! there's always something jolly going on in a farmer's life!"

"Not in the winter!" cried Harty.

"Oh, but indeed there is," returned Fred triumphantly. "There is the cattle to be foddered, and logs to be cut; and then there are the jolly, cosy evenings round the big

fires, and come the early spring there is the ground to break, and the seed to be sown. And the mill, too—I'd like to be a miller! It's as grand as any of your ships, to see the old sails turning with the wind, and know it is grinding the corn for the bread of hundreds of people, maybe. I like the creak, creak, of the jolly old mill. There's the top of the tents, Harty! See the blue flag? *Our flag that is!*"

The field was now in sight. Soon the boys could hear the shouts of the assembling cricketers; and as they cleared the stile they were espied by several old friends who ran to greet them.

Meanwhile Dolly had been working diligently at her lessons, to get done in good time, for she was anticipating her visit to the cricket-field with great delight. But no vision of coming pleasure ever interfered with the little girl's duties; and she had the gratification of receiving great praise from Aunt Charlotte, who, when the last lesson was said, bade her go for a run in the garden till their early dinner should be ready.

So, accompanied by the faithful Bannock, Dolly hurried away to the corner where the blue forget-me-nots grew thick; and had soon her little basket full. She covered them with cool green leaves, and then she hastened back to the shade of the old tree on the grass, where she occupied herself in making the flowers up into bunches for herself and aunt to wear, in honour of the Blue party.

The dinner over, Aunt Charlotte went to dress herself

for their visit; and Dolly, having with Jessie's assistance attired herself in her pretty white frock with a blue sash, and the usual ribbon in her hair, sat down to wait till aunty should be ready. All at once a thought struck her.

"I'll take Miriam," she said to herself. "Annie Fairbairn has never seen the pretty hat aunty made for her; and she shall wear the colours too, so she shall."

Quick as thought was Dolly. She ran upstairs, got dear Miriam out of the box, where she lay wrapped in tissue paper. Of course you will guess that Miriam was a doll. A very handsome doll too, that had been sent to Dolly, all the way from India, by the dear mother whom she could only just remember.

"How glad I am that her dress is blue," said Dolly aloud, though there was no one to hear her.

She was putting on the new hat, when she noticed, just in time, that it was made of straw, trimmed with yellow silk!

"Oh, dear! dear!" exclaimed the little girl. "I could never let her wear that!"

Jessie came in at the moment to see whatever Miss Dolly was about.

"Isn't it tiresome!" said the child ruefully. "I was going to make my dear Miriam so smart to go to the cricket-field, and see, Jessie, her hat is yellow!"

"Well, miss, and lovely she will look, too, in that splendid silk dress," said Jessie.



"But don't you see the hat is yellow?" said poor Dolly. "And yellow is the other party."

Jessie laughed. "La! I don't suppose anybody will ever notice it," she said.

Dolly was indignant.

"I would much rather she did not go at all," she said, "than not wear Harty's and Freddy's colours."

"Now, Dolly," called Aunt Charlotte from below, "are you ready, my dear?"

"Yes, aunty, I am coming," cried Dolly; "I will put this hood on Miriam," she said. "Please tie it, Jessie."

So with a pretty little white muslin hood Miss Miriam was arrayed, and very seasonable and cool it looked, forming a most agreeable contrast to the delicate blue silk of her dress, the golden ringlets of her soft hair, and the pearly beads upon her waxen neck.

Aunt Charlotte contented herself with the bunch of forget-me-nots her little niece had prepared for her. Dolly looked anxiously to see that no sign of the objectionable yellow was apparent in her aunt's dress. But she could discover none, with the exception of a gold brooch, which could hardly be reckoned against her. So they set out very happily for their stroll through green fields and shady lanes. They had not gone far when they were overtaken by Bannock, racing as usual, with his mouth open, tongue hanging out, and panting, as though he had no breath to spare, yet finding enough to run round them and bark, as much as to say, "You thought

to leave me behind, did you? but I have found you out!"

"Oh, aunty, see!" cried Dolly, "Bannock has a blue ribbon on."

"Who has decorated him, I wonder?" said Aunt Charlotte.

"I suppose it was James," replied Dolly; "I heard him calling Bannock just now. I wonder where he got the ribbon from?"

"Most likely he begged it of Jessie," replied her aunt. "She has a little box full of odds and ends. It was kind of them to think of pleasing Harty and you in that way."

They walked slowly, for it was very warm, and by the time they came in sight of the cricket-field both Dolly and her aunt began to wish to sit down and rest.

"How terribly hot they must be, running and playing!" said Aunt Charlotte. "It is quite hot enough taking it easily in the shade as we are doing."

"There are the flags, and the tents!" exclaimed Dolly. "Aunty, do you hear the music? Oh, what a number of people! What a noise! Oh, whatever are they doing?" For they had now come in full sight of the cricket-field, and beheld a strange scene.

A large body of youths appeared moving in a mass, hoisting one high above the rest, upon their shoulders. Loud shouts filled the air; huzzas, and clapping of

hands, and cheering. The band played louder and higher, "See the conquering hero comes!"

Flags waved, people laughed, and ladies chattered; and still the crowd came on, bearing high the lad upon their shoulders.

"Whatever is it?" cried Dolly, full of excitement. "Come along, aunty, let us go on and see!"





## CHAPTER VI.

### MAGIC MUSIC.

It was one of the "Blue" party they were conveying in triumph round the field, on the shoulders of the boy mob, composed of those on the side that had won, and who were shouting themselves hoarse.

"Fairbairn for ever! Huzza!"

"Blues victorious! Hurrah!"

"Blue the conqueror!"

"Three cheers for the Blues!"

"Hip, hip, hurrah!"

These were the cries which filled the air, and greeted Dolly and Aunt Charlotte as they entered the field.

It was Tom—Freddy's brother—who had won the final game for his party, and, indeed, had been the great player throughout. So he was the hero of the day.

To tell the truth, the hero of the day looked somewhat uneasy at his position, for the boys were wild with delight, and by no means gentle in their movements. However, he was set down, safe and sound, in front of the

tent where his own party were collected, and received the compliments of the ladies and gentlemen there assembled on his capital playing. The great event of the day was over, but there was yet plenty of amusement. Some of the lads got up a fresh game at cricket among themselves. Others formed into parties for football or prisoners' base, while some had determined on exploring the wood which grew close up to one side of the field.

"What a famous place for hide and seek!" said Harty to his friend Fred, who, with some others, had made up a party for the woods.

"Yes," returned Freddy, "and there are some jolly nooks and corners about it that would puzzle anybody to find if they did not know them."

"I hope there are no snakes, though," said Smithson; he was a boy living in town, and did not know much of country life at all.

Freddy laughed. "I don't know but there may be a boa-constrictor or two," he said.

The rest laughed loudly; but Freddy did not want to make his companion feel uneasy, so he said,—

"Seriously though, Smithson, I never have seen any snakes; but there may be, though I think it is too dry. But they would be very harmless, I should think, if there were."

"I don't know," said Willie Crowe, one of the party. "I remember reading of a man who was bitten by a viper,

and his hand swelled, and his arm grew so bad it began to mortify ; so they had to cut it off, to save his life."

" Well, we must look out for snakes, then," said Harty ; " but at any rate, they won't be up the trees, where I shall look for nuts. Just see how the branches are loaded."

" They are not ripe yet," said Fred Fairbairn. " Come this way, and you will see what we call the hermit's cave."

He led the way to a small opening between the trees, where there was a patch of bright green grass ; a small spring of water that bubbled up from the earth and ran trickling away, kept it fresh and cool. A mass of rock and earth, covered with climbing wild flowers and moss, shadowed a deep recess, where two or three persons might easily have sat or stood, and been sheltered from the rain or the hot rays of the summer sun. A mountain ash drooped its graceful branches low over the entrance ; and the birds sang all around in the trees, for they were so little molested in this quiet retreat that they had no fear.

Freddy lifted the boughs of the ash-tree, and his friends all passed in. They stood in a group quite hidden by the rock, and the thick leaves of the ash.

" Isn't it fine ?" asked Fred.

" Jolly !"

" Quite a hermit's cell."

" What a place for a picnic !"

"I could go to sleep here."

So spoke the boys all at once.

Freddy laughed. "I found the place out one day," he said, "but somebody had been here before me, for there was the leather peak of a boy's cap, and an old boot-lace here. But I never saw any one near it since. Ah! what was that?"

He sprang to the entrance of the cave, and looked through the branches of the tree.

"What was it?" cried the others.

"I thought I saw some one looking through the leaves. Did you?"

"I didn't," said Harty. And the rest made answer to the same effect. They had seen nothing.

"It must have been my fancy," said Freddy. "I have been in the wood at all hours, and never met any one but my father's men, or some of the village people looking for a lost sheep. But it is very seldom I see anybody. I often bring a book up here when I want to have a good quiet read, only the worst of it is it's such a distance, I can't hear the bell for dinner. Once I had been here five hours, and they didn't know where I was. I can tell you I was nearly starved."

"You should bring out a supply with you," said Willie Crowe.

"Isn't it a jolly place, though?" said Harty. "I could live here all my life."

The boys laughed loud at him, and once more

Freddy led the way, as they quitted the little cosy nook.

"Come along," he said, "and don't look round till I tell you."

So they followed him for a few minutes, when all at once he said, "Now look!" and turned round.

They all did the same, and looked back upon the way they had come. Almost insensibly they had been ascending. It had been up hill, yet so gentle was the ascent they had not noticed it.

Now they stood on a green plot above one portion of the wood; below them lay the cricket-field, with the tents, the flags flying, the gaily dressed ladies and children, and the gentlemen and the boys in the cricketing suits, with the yellow and the blue caps, all shining brightly in the sun. Now and again came a burst of music from the band. It was a pretty scene.

"It is like a picture," said one boy.

"Or a toy taken out of a box and set out," said another.

"The men in their black coats look like ants, and the ladies like flowers and butterflies," said Freddy. "I do believe I can see your sister and Annie," he said to Harty.

"Where?" asked the other. "I can't make out any one from an other."

"There, in the corner of the field," returned Freddy. "They are going towards my mother's tent, don't you



see that small tent in the corner? My mother had that put up for her especial friends, who she said wanted to be quiet, and not be crushed up in the large tent with the strangers. I believe it is them. And look, Harty, there is your dog Bannock, close by them."

"Then it is Dolly, I daresay," was Harty's reply, "but I cannot make them out. How good your eyes must be, Fred!"

"I can see things a long way off," replied Freddy, "better than things that are near."

"That is funny," rejoined Harty. "I wish we were a little nearer that refreshment tent!" put in poor young Smithson. "I am so thirsty, I would have drunk at that spring down by your hermit's cave, Fred, only I have heard that such springs are often poisonous."

"Ha! ha!" shouted Willie Crowe. "Why, Smithson, what with your snakes, and your poisoned springs, your life in the woods would not be a very cheerful one."

The rest of the boys joined in the laugh; but Freddy refrained.

"It's true, though," he said; "Charles is right. I know I have read of places where the water was bad, but that is not, for I have drunk it scores of times. I am thirsty too, and I know where we can get something to drink—lemonade, or curds-and-whey, or milk. Come along—follow my leader."

Away he sprang, yet higher the trees closed round again. The wood here ran up the side of the hill, which

grew steeper. The boys cheered merrily, and followed him full speed.

Meanwhile Dolly, and her friend Annie Fairbairn, had been enjoying themselves in their way.

Annie was delighted at the idea of Miriam being dressed in their colours; and only regretted she had not done the same with her own doll.

"But you see, Dolly," she said, "I had to help mother with the tables; for it was all cook and Hannah could do, to bake pies and make cakes; and the lemonade mother made; and I had to pick the fruit besides, and to set out the flowers. And fancy, we had not one blue flower, only Canterbury Bells. Your dear forget-me-nots came in beautifully. I was so pleased when Freddy brought them."

They were strolling down by the side of the field, keeping in the shade, while they chatted. Presently they met Mrs. Fairbairn and two or three ladies who were coming towards the house:—

"Annie," said her mother, "I wish you and Dolly would go and sit in the small tent there, till we return. We are going in doors just now, to have some tea; and we have left our work and things down in the tent. It will be cooler there for you, dear, and the servants shall bring you something from the refreshment tent, if you like."

"We will go, mother," said Annie, "Dolly hasn't seen the dear little tent; but I don't think we want anything just now, thank you, mother dear."

The little girls went on to the small tent which had been pitched in the corner of the field nearest to the wood. The great beech-trees shadowed it beautifully, and it was certainly the pleasantest spot.

"This tent is to be kept here all the summer," said Annie, as they drew near to it. "Father says it will be so nice for us to bring our books and work out here."

"Yes," said Dolly, "it would be a good place to drink tea in, like we do at home, under the tree, on the grass."

"Only it would be such a distance to fetch the things," replied Annie.

The little girls entered the tent. On the seats, set about, there lay a book or two, a silk shawl, and a work-basket.

Annie was carrying Miriam, and they were just settling themselves into cosy seats, when suddenly the most delightful music struck up close to them. It was soft and low at first, then grew louder. It seemed to come from the air, in the tent.

The children looked at each other.

"Is it a bird?" said Dolly.

Annie shook her head.

They listened in silence. The music stopped. There was a click and a whirr, then it went on again; but the tune had changed. At first it had been a waltz tune; now it was stately and slow, like a march.

"It is magic music," said Annie, laughing.

Dolly looked into the work-basket beside her, peeped

at a book that was near it ; but the music continued, now soft, now loud.

All at once Annie rose, and on tiptoe went round to the other side of where Dolly sat. There lay what looked like another book, dark brown, like leather, but it was of wood, with small stars in gold upon it. The little girl put her ear down to the box, and then beckoned Dolly to come. She also bent down and listened. Just then the music ceased.

"It is a musical box," said Annie. "I think it belongs to Mrs. Smithson. I heard Charles telling Freddy his mother had a musical box, and would let us hear it."

"How pretty !" said Dolly ; "will it play again ?"

"Not till it is wound up," replied her friend. "It has to be wound up with a key, like a clock."

"Like Pranks's toys," said Dolly.

"What toys ?" asked Annie.

Then Dolly had to describe the mechanical toys to her companion, who was as anxious to see them as could be.

"Perhaps you might come to see us soon," said Dolly, "and I would show you my farm-yard. Do you think your mother would bring you to-morrow, if aunty asked her ?"

"I think the day after to-morrow," replied Annie, "because to-morrow we shall all be busy helping to clear away everything after to-day, don't you see, Dolly ?"

So they chatted on for some time, till both little girls

began to feel, as the boys in the wood had felt, very thirsty.

"I will go over to the big tent and get something," said Annie. "Would you like strawberries and cream?"

What little girl ever said "No" to strawberries and cream? At any rate, Dolly did not.

"You will stay here, won't you, Dolly?" said her friend; "there is such a crowd in the large tent. If I can see Hannah or Ben, I will get them to bring a tray and some cake, but I can carry the strawberries myself."

"Shall I come and help you?" asked Dolly.

"Oh, no; I shall not be long. My mother told us to stay here, and she would be angry if she came and found neither of us here. I can get the things sooner than you would. You stay here, dear, and I will soon be back."

Away ran Annie.

Dolly waited a long time, it seemed to her; but the little girl was alone, and it appeared dull after the chatter of her young friend. She looked out at the groups of boys playing in the field, at some distance from the tent, then she tried to make out her aunt among some ladies who were walking on the lawn by the house. At last she grew so thirsty and weary of waiting, she thought she would just run over to the tent and see if she could find Annie, who was, perhaps, wanting some one to help her carry the good things.

She was soon at the tent.

There was a crowd indeed. Ladies chatting, and

eating ices ; gentlemen standing about, with plates or glasses in their hands, talking and laughing.

One put his hand on Dolly's shoulder. It was Mr. Fairbairn, who was fond of both the children. "Why, my little lassie," he said, "where have you been hiding? I have not seen you before to-day. I hope you have been enjoying yourself. And where is the bold Harty? the boy that is to be a brave sailor lad, is he not, eh?"

"I hope not, sir," said Dolly, shyly, for several gentlemen were standing round. They laughed at her answer.

"You *hope not*: eh, Dolly," said Mr. Fairbairn. "Why is that, eh?"

"I shouldn't like him to be drowned," said Dolly, blushing like a rose, at seeing so many eyes turned upon her.

"Oh! but all sailors are not drowned, my child. Here is Captain Crowe; he has sailed, I don't know how many times. He is all alive and hearty."

"I would rather my brother was a farmer, though," said poor Dolly, who, though reluctant to speak at all, would not refrain from putting in her little word when her dear brother was concerned.

"Ah! my dear, you're right enough," said good-natured Captain Crowe. "The farmers have the best of it." And he sang a verse of a song: "*Ye farming folk of England, who sit at home at ease.*"

There was a laugh all round, and Dolly escaped unnoticed. A moment after she met Annie, laden with a

dish of strawberries and cream, and something wrapped in a cloth, under her arm. "Oh, Dolly! are you here?" she cried, out of breath. "Such work as I have had to get these. Please take this from under my arm—it is cake. I could not find Ben or Hannah. I was so sorry to be such a time. Come along."

They hurried across the field. It was getting cooler now.

"I believe I never could have carried it all by myself," said Annie.

"It was a good thing I came," returned her friend, as she hurried on.

"Now for a feast," said Annie joyfully.

Dolly entered the tent. She gazed round in dismay; then she uttered a loud cry.

"What ever is the matter?" exclaimed Annie, as she came up.

Dolly stared wildly at her, then burst into tears.

The tent was empty! The musical-box, the books, the work-basket, and poor Miriam, all had disappeared. Nothing but the bare seats met their eyes.

"Oh, Dolly!" cried her friend, "why did you leave the tent, when you promised to stay? Some one has stolen all the things. What *shall* we do?"

Poor Dolly could only sob and cry, as she sank upon one of the seats, and covered her face with her hands.



## CHAPTER VII.

### AN ADVENTURE.

MEANWHILE the merry party of boys up in the wood had been enjoying their scramble. After calling at the cottage, where, as Freddy had told them, they found plenty of good refreshment; consisting of curds and whey, lemonade, and ripe fruit; they climbed the hill yet higher; and so, getting out on to the breezy downs, had coasted the distant beach, in view of the glorious sea, whence they had watched the sun set, and amused themselves by guessing the destination of the various vessels they made out, sailing swiftly along, in the blue distance.

Harty had amused and interested the party very much, by recounting the experiences of poor Peter; and one small bay, the boys looked down upon from their lofty resting-place, might well have been the identical spot where the little cottage was submerged.

"I like hearing about such things when I know they are true," said Willie Crowe; "my father can tell some



good tales of what he has seen in his voyages; but he says some of the stories in books are not a bit true, and are written by people who only pretend they have been to the places they talk about."

"Shall you go to sea?" asked Harty.

"Yes," was Willie's reply. "I am to sail with my father the year after next, when I leave school."

Harty looked with renewed interest at the boy, no older than himself, whose destiny was fixed for him so happily, according to Harty's idea.

"I wish I were you," he said gravely, a minute after, when most of them were thinking of something else, and it made them laugh.

"Harty is sea-mad," said Freddy Fairbairn.

"Ah!" returned Willie Crowe, "I don't know that I should care to sail with any one else; but when it is one's father, and his own ship—"

"Yes, it is different; but everybody can't have a father for a captain," remarked Harty gloomily.

"I suppose you mean a captain for a father," said Smithson. "But you need not be so solemn about it, Harty."

The other boys laughed, and Harty could only join in, for he knew his words must have sounded oddly. "I should like to wander about the world," he said, with some bravado in his tone, "even if I do not go to sea. It would be fine to meet with adventures, wouldn't it now?"

"Depends on what sort of adventures," said Wilmot, a boy who was a head taller than Harty, though very little older. "You wouldn't care to meet with the adventure my uncle did the other day down in Cornwall."

"What was that? Do tell us!" said several of the boys together.

"He is a doctor," you know," resumed Wilmot, "and, of course, he often has to ride great distances, often through places that are strange to him, for he has not settled there long. His nag is pretty sure-footed, as a rule; but that evening he was deep in thought (my uncle, I mean, not the nag), and let the bridle hang loose on the ani-



mal's neck. All at once the creature stumbled, unseated the old gentleman, and he felt himself flying over Whitefoot's neck through the air, and down, down into darkness. As he went, my uncle says, he felt something, as it were, surround and bear him up somewhat; and, when he reached the bottom, he felt soft and warm, but half

smothered, with his face all covered up, and his eyes blinded. It was some minutes before he got his face uncovered; then it was still all darkness. He groped about with his arms, but could only feel the mass of soft substance that weighed down his legs and body. He hallooed at the top of his voice, but he heard nothing else. He looked up, and at last he made out the stars shining up ever so far above him. Then he began to think he was down some disused shaft, and that he might lie there till Doomsday, and nobody ever find him."

"There was his horse," said Willie Crowe; "he would go home very likely, and they would look for his master."

"Ay, but the chances were they would not have thought of looking where he was," returned Wilmot. "However, the dear old gentleman says he had made up his mind that he should not be found till it was too late. He was quite ready to meet death, he says, and I don't doubt it, for he is a brave, good fellow as ever lived.

"By-and-by the moon rose, and shone right down into this shaft; my uncle then made out that it was a very narrow, deep sort of pit, bricked all round; and then, to his amazement, he found he was wrapped up—head, body, and limbs—in a big, soft, heavy carpet!

"Well, you know, it was so absurd, that he says he burst out laughing, though there was nobody there to hear him. I can quite believe it, for he enjoys a joke.

"'But don't you see,' says my uncle, 'they'll miss the carpet, and will think of looking for that, maybe, down here,

when they would never have looked for me!’ So he made himself as comfortable as he could; and I believe had quite a refreshing snooze before morning.

“By-and-by people began to be astir, and my uncle caught snatches of sounds overhead. He could not make out words, but he fancied there was a row going on, and not unlikely, on account of the carpet, of which he was in possession, quite against his will. So he shouted and hallooed till he was hoarse, but with no success. The fact was, they were making such a noise up above he had no chance, poor fellow. After a time he heard voices come nearer, and then a woman said, ‘I tell you, it can’t be. It was not near the well. Besides, there was no wind; besides, the lid was on.’ Then the light was darkened for a moment, he guessed by some one looking down. My uncle sent up such a shout as made the place echo. There was a yell of terror, and the next minute the voice shrieked out, ‘The thief is down the well with our carpet! Make haste, Tom! be quick, Harry! He is down here—make haste!’ Just as though he could have escaped very easily! Well, in a very short time they got him up, carpet and all. It was lucky for my uncle he was known to some thereabouts as the doctor, or he might have got roughly handled, for attempting to get off with the carpet. But you may guess what a joke it was when it was explained, and the old gentleman came off none the worse, except a little stiffness and much dust. The carpet had been hung out on a line, right in front of the dry

well, which, however, had not got a cover on, or it could not have happened. The horse had gone out of its track and stumbled over a tree-stump. Not much of an adventure, after all, is it? But for the carpet, though, it might have been the last of my uncle's. So you see, Harty, you need not go to sea to meet with adventures," said Freddy, laughing; "and as you are to be a doctor, who knows but you may stumble on a well some day."

"Mind you pitch a carpet down first, though, Harty," said Willie Crowe.

"Come along," said Freddy, as he rose from the ground where they had been sitting, and the rest followed him; "it is about time we were thinking of getting home. Mother expects us all in to tea at seven."

Harty had not joined in the laughter of the others. He felt rather annoyed at Freddy's jesting, and he said to himself, "I shan't be a doctor, I know, for all they may say. I know what I shall do. I'll let them see!"

He was a little behind the rest of the boys now. They were merrily chatting, and leaping downwards among the trees on the woodland paths, where it was beginning to grow dusky, though out in the open parts the sun still lighted all up in splendour.

Suddenly there was the loud bark of a dog, and Bannock came tearing through the bushes, panting, barking, growling at intervals.

"It's Harty's dog," said Freddy Fairbairn; "he is looking for his master. See how pleased he'll be to find him."

But no—Bannock rushed past Harty, who had come forward, and he jumped up with a loud bark to young Smithson, the town boy; and then the dog made a bound forward, and then back again, and whined, and gave a muttered growl, and again barked, just as if he were trying to make them understand.

“He wants us to follow him,” said Harty quickly, for he knew Bannock’s ways. “He has found something!—there is something the matter! What is it, Bannock?—good dog!”

The creature just acknowledged his master’s words by licking his hand, and then again he jumped up to Smithson and barked loudly.

“It is you he wants!” cried Harty. “He wants to lead you to see something! Come, Smithson!—come, Fred! Forward, good dog, then!—forward!”

Away went Bannock, and away went the boys after him!

It was as much as they could do to keep him in sight. Lightly the dog bounded over tree-stumps and ditches and tangled masses of undergrowth. Jump and run as they might, the lads could not clear obstacles as did the four-footed racer. He went almost like a bird—nearly as noiselessly, too, for he never barked nor made the smallest sound. But the two-legged pursuers were far from noiseless. Once or twice one of them came down sprawling, though they were soon up again, and several times there would be a shout of “Mind that stump, Harty!” or,

"There's another ditch, Willie!" These warnings came from Freddy Fairbairn, who knew the ground pretty well, though Baunock, they found, was leading them by a nearer path than that by which they had ascended. Soon, to their surprise, they were out upon the green sward, close to the Hermit's Cave.

They stopped, for the dog had darted in, under the drooping boughs of the mountain ash, and disappeared.

The boys, breathless from running, followed him, stooping low, and crowding into the little recess. It was almost dark, but the rays of the setting sun gleamed through one opening, and gave light enough to make out Baunock at the farther end, routing and growling and tugging at something.

Freddy went up, followed by Harty, and together they helped the dog, who was dragging at a basket, almost hidden in leaves and moss, in the dark corner of the cave.

This they bore out of the darkening shadows into the open day, and, wondering, the boys crowded round.

Smithson uttered a cry of amazement.

"Why, it is my mother's work-basket and her shawl! We brought them in the chaise this morning."

"And here are books, too!" cried out Freddy.

"My mother's! And Annie's silks and knitting-needles! How on earth did they come here?"

At that instant Bannock, who had been sniffing about near the cave, gave a sharp bark and sprang into the bushes. There was a rustling sound, a loud scream, in a child's voice, like one in pain.

The boys listened in wonder !

The dog was growling savagely !







## CHAPTER VIII.

### MAKING AMENDS.

IN the cricket-field all was confusion and dismay. The news that the tent had been robbed soon spread among the guests, and every one came crowding round asking "How!" "When!" and "What!"

Nobody could answer, for nobody knew anything definite. All that could be told was, that the things had been left in the tent, and now they were gone.

"Was nobody in the tent?" asked Mr. Fairbairn.

"I bade Annie stay here, with Dolly Winwood," answered his wife.

Mr. Fairbairn turned to Annie.

"We were so thirsty, father, I went to fetch some strawberries and things, and Dolly promised to stay here."

Aunt Charlotte looked at Dolly, who was sobbing bitterly, but made no answer.

"It was your place to have stayed here when you were bidden, Annie," said Mrs. Fairbairn. "I told you some

one should bring you refreshments, if you wanted them."

"But, mother, I could not see any one to ask, and Dolly promised to stay." Dolly just lifted her tear-stained face from her hands. "I did promise," she said, sobbing, "but I forgot. It was my fault, I know."

At this honest confession of her fault, most of the bystanders felt their hearts sympathize with the poor child.

"You are a sneak, Miss Annie," whispered Tom, her elder brother, "laying it all on to Dolly."

"I am not a sneak!" cried Annie, and she too burst into tears.

"Come, come, there is no use in crying about it," said good-natured Mr. Fairbairn. "My sister is the greatest loser; she has lost her beautiful musical box she was so fond of."

"And your India shawl too," said Aunt Charlotte, turning to Mrs. Smithson. "Dear, dear, you have indeed been unfortunate."



"My box is the worst, but it cannot be helped," replied Mrs. Smithson. "What else has gone?"

"There were a few books," answered Mrs. Fairbairn, "and my work-basket."

"And Dolly's Miriam," said Annie sorrowfully, while poor Dolly's tears flowed afresh.

"That is the least loss," said Aunt Charlotte gravely. "I am indeed sorry that my little niece should abandon her trust, as she seems to have done. She must bear her share in the consequences."

"But all this time," said Captain Crowe, "the thief or thieves may be hard by. Might it not be as well to start a search?"

"But which way to go, or where to look?" cried Tom Fairbairn.

"And whom to suspect?" said his father. "We never lost anything before. We have no thieves that I know of."

"Oh! but I remember your writing to me an account of your hen-roost being robbed some time since," said Mrs. Smithson to her brother, Mr. Fairbairn.

"True, we thought it must have been the gipsies, who had been seen in the neighbourhood. But we have heard nothing of them since that time."

"You may depend upon it, they have something to do with this affair," said Captain Crowe.

"Let us hunt about!" cried Tom, and several of the lads echoed the request.

"Do let us search the wood, shall we?"

They were all eagerness to be off. But the elder and wiser people opposed the scheme.

"It is getting dusk," said Mr. Fairbairn; "you would not be able to discover them, even if they are there. But, in all probability, they have made off with their plunder long ago."

"Come, we had better be going in-doors," said Mrs. Fairbairn. "The tea will be waiting."

"I will do all I can to-morrow, first thing," said her husband. "We will put the constables on the track of these gentry, if they are hunting our neighbourhood again. It is too bad. In our own field too."

"So near home," said one lady.

"In view of the house," added another.

They were turning towards the house, when suddenly they heard a shouting, and the voices of the party from the wood.

Directly after came Fred, Harty, and the rest, bearing in triumph the basket and shawl, with all they had found in the cave. We may imagine the joyful surprise which greeted their appearance.

"Where did you find them?"

"Who had got them?"

"Where is the thief?"

"Oh! I *am* glad!"

These and other exclamations came fast from the lips of the eager crowd.

Freddy went on to explain, how and where the things had been found. "And Bannock had caught hold of some one!" he continued. "I believe it was a child, for there was a cry like a very small boy; but when we ran up to where the sound came from, we found only the dog smelling about and whining, so I suppose whoever it was had made off."

"We picked up this piece of rag, that Bannock had torn off with his teeth," said Willie Crowe.

"Ah! it looks like the rag of some wretched gipsy child," said Mr. Fairbairn; "lucky it was not his flesh, instead of his dress, the dog's teeth met in."

"How ever did he get away?" said Harty.

"Very likely climbed a tree," said Tom Fairbairn.

"Well, well, we can do no more to-night," said his father. "Come, now, let us go in-doors."

"We are fortunate to have recovered the booty," remarked Captain Crowe.

But when all met in the house, where the ladies had already carried the basket, it was found that neither the musical box nor poor Miriam were among the recovered property. This discovery cast a damp upon the general satisfaction which had been felt before.

As the party seated themselves round the table, spread with the numberless good things Mrs. Fairbairn had provided, the conversation could turn on nothing but the event of the afternoon.

"I suppose it must have been some gipsy boy who

had wandered away from the rest to look at the cricketers, and no doubt the sight of the empty tent and the pretty things tempted him," said one.

"No doubt it was a child," remarked another; "the fact of the doll and the musical box being gone shows that. An older person would have taken that silk shawl, which is really valuable."

"Oh, an older person would have carried off the basket and all," said Mrs. Fairbairn; "it seems to me it must have been a very small or very weak child, who could only carry the basket a short distance; and so, having hid the larger things, just took away what pleased its own fancy, and what could be at the same time easily hidden under its rags."

"How shocking!" said another lady. "Such young thieves!"

"But, mother," said young Smithson, "how could the gipsy child know it was a musical box? For the matter of looks, one of these books has a far smarter outside."

"Unless he heard it play," put in Willie Crowe.

"I had wound it up just before I left the tent, to amuse the children," said Mrs. Smithson; "did it play, my dear, when you were there?" She addressed herself to Dolly, who sat near her, and who, grieved and remorseful, had sat with her eyes cast down, unable to enter into the enjoyment of the evening's delights.

"Yes, ma'am," the little girl replied, in a low voice; "we heard it play; it was beautiful."

"Very likely the young scamp was loitering about near the tent," said Captain Crowe, "and the music attracted him, and made him resolve to possess himself of it."

Mrs. Smithson went on talking to Dolly in a quiet, gentle voice, while the rest rose from the table and bustled off to various in-door amusements provided for them. "Do not let the thought of this worry you, and spoil your pleasure, my dear," she said kindly; "I might have lost my box any other way. It cannot be helped, and I am very glad to have my shawl again."

"Oh, ma'am, I am so sorry!" was all poor Dolly could say. Her pleasure was gone for that day, the day which had begun so gaily; her Miriam lost for ever; herself in disgrace, for she knew how displeased Aunt Charlotte was by any act of disobedience; indeed, she could not forgive herself.

Annie was not much less unhappy. Tom had told Freddy how their sister had laid the blame on to Dolly, and both boys agreed it was a "sneaking" action, to try and get herself out of a scrape, by accusing their visitor and friend.

"I only wish we could find the musical box," said Tom Fairbairn.

"And the doll," put in Freddy. "Dolly dressed it all in our colours, too; I saw it. She is a jolly little thing, and it's too bad of Miss Annie."

A call from the other boys to their game broke up the conference; but later in the evening it was agreed between the brothers that they would, on the morrow,

go and thoroughly search the wood, for any traces of the gipsies ; and also to find if by chance the missing articles could not be recovered.

Willie Crowe, who, with his parents, was staying at the Fairbairns, was to join them, and Harty longed to form one of the party.

"We ought to have Bannock," said Freddy, "because he hunted the things up so well, and most likely he would know the thief again."

"Of course he would," said Harty.

"After all, we don't know for certain," said Tom, "that the child, or whoever the dog laid hold of, was the thief, do we ?"

"No," replied Harty, "only I think they would not have been in such a hurry to get away if it had not been."

Here Harty was called away by Aunt Charlotte, who was taking her departure. Dolly took a tearful farewell of her young friend. Annie had been made to feel thoroughly ashamed of her hastiness in accusing Dolly ; but the latter, on her part, knew she had been to blame for what had happened, and their hearts were very heavy.

If Dolly could have restored the musical box to its owner, she would gladly have given up her dear Miriam for ever ; but both were gone, and she could only feel sad, and so unhappy, that she believed she should never know what it was to be gay and light-hearted again. Poor, smiling-faced Dolly ! she was grave enough now !



Aunt Charlotte made a rule of never saying anything unpleasant to the children when they parted from her for the night. She knew they would reflect upon past occurrences in their own minds, and she felt sure that her little niece would be sobbing out a confession of her fault, and a supplication for forgiveness, when she knelt down, to say her prayers at her bedside that night. But on the morrow, after lessons were finished, and before Harty had returned from school, Aunt Charlotte spoke of what had taken place the preceding day:—

“And what do you think is the proper thing to do, my dear,” she said, “to show Mrs. Smithson how sorry you really are, and to make up to her the loss of her box?”

“I should like to give her another,” said the little girl.

“Of course, no other could be so precious to her as that one,” returned Aunt Charlotte, “because that was given her by her son, who brought it from Switzerland on purpose; he died, you know, in India some time ago. Your father knew him there. Mrs. Smithson had been telling us about it yesterday in the tent, and of how she prized the box. It was a great pity it was left in the tent; but she did so with the kind motive of pleasing Annie and you. However, I agree with you, my dear, that it would be quite right if you could give Mrs. Smithson another box. It would cost a good deal, I am afraid.”

“And I have not much now,” said Dolly, “the farm-yard took nearly all mine I had saved.” Suddenly her face brightened. “Aunty, do you think they would give

me a musical box in exchange for my farm-yard, and the money I have left in my box."

Aunt Charlotte looked pleased at this proof of Dolly's real regret for her fault, and the desire to atone for it.

"We will see," she said, "and if there should be more money required, I will add it for you."

"Thank you, aunty," cried Dolly. A load seemed lifted from her heart, as she felt she could do something to make up for what had happened partly through her neglect. "Do you think," she went on, "that Peter Pranks could get a musical box for us?"

"I have no doubt he could," returned her aunt. "The dealers in those mechanical toys would very likely have plenty of them."

"I will fetch my farm-yard now," said Dolly cheerfully, "and will you pack it up nicely, aunt? I won't play with it again, in case any part might get broken, and they might not take it back."

She ran away to fetch it. Poor child, in her anxiety to make good the loss of their friends, she had almost forgotten her own loss of her pretty doll, Miriam. Dolly was very just and honourable in her ideas. Had she been in Annie's place yesterday, and Annie in hers, she certainly would never have turned the blame on her friend. But she honestly owned to her fault, and was ready to make all the amends in her power.

Dolly had scarcely quitted the room, when Harty

entered. He brought a note from his schoolmaster to Aunt Charlotte.

When his aunt had read it, she turned to Harty,—

“Did you ask for another half-holiday, then, Harty?” she inquired.

The boy looked gloomy. “I wanted to go with Tom and Fred; they are going to search the woods.”

“You had a holiday yesterday, I should certainly not have allowed you to ask for another, had I known you intended it,” said his aunt.

“They want Bannock to go,” said Harty.

“James has taken Bannock over this morning,” was Aunt Charlotte’s reply. “I promised Mrs. Fairbairn last night I would send him with the dog.”

“Why shouldn’t I go?” muttered Harty, with a lowering brow and ill-tempered voice.

“For the very good reason, Harty,” replied his aunt, “that you had a whole holiday yesterday, and you are old enough to understand that life is not to be made up of holidays. Though only a boy you have your duties to attend to, and they must not be put aside for the gratification of every whim for enjoying yourself that arises.”

“I promised the Fairbairns I would go,” grumbled Harty, “and I ought.”

“You could not have given a certain promise,” resumed his aunt, “when it depended upon your schoolmaster and myself. He is vexed at your asking for another holiday.”

"It would only be a *half*-holiday," still persisted Harty.

His aunt rose, she was weary of the discussion :—

"You should not have asked, Harty," she said. "How indignant you would have been had any other boy in the school expected such an indulgence ! Be just, and learn to exercise self-denial."

She quitted the room. Her nephew, so far from taking her kindly advice to heart, was muttering and nodding his head, all to himself.

Dolly entered with the box containing her farm-yard. She began arranging it as it had been when first opened by the pedlar.

"I can't make it fit in nicely," she said. "I must leave it till aunty comes in."

"Let me set it going," said her brother, beginning to take out the toy.

"No, Harty, please, I would rather not," said the little girl ; "I am not going to play with it any more."

Then she told him of the plan she had arranged with her aunt, for making up to their friend the loss of her musical box.

"It wasn't all your fault," said Harty. "I think Annie was just as bad. Well, very nearly as bad then. And she lost nothing, and you lost your doll."

"Ah ! my poor Miriam !" sighed Dolly.

"But it won't hurt the farm-yard," urged Harty, "to set it going just this once."

"There is dinner," said his sister, as they heard Jessie give the usual summons in the passage.

"I don't want any dinner," said the boy sulkily.

"Oh, Harty," pleaded his sister, "aunt will be vexed if you don't come at once."

"Aunt is very disagreeable," grumbled the ill-tempered one. But his appetite was urging him, in spite of his temper.

"Master Harty, Miss Dolly," called Jessie, "dinner is ready."

The little girl hastened in answer to the summons. Her brother followed more slowly.

Aunt Charlotte took no notice of her nephew's evident ill-humour. She talked to them both as usual. When dinner was over, she bade Harty wait for a note to take to his master. Harty dared not refuse, but he obeyed with an ill grace.

He departed, when the note was finished, with it in his pocket. He sauntered along. At the end of the lane leading to the cottage he met a schoolfellow. He called to him—"Bobby, will you give this pencil to Owen Benson? I borrowed it of him this morning." The little boy stared.

"Why can't you give it to him yourself?" he asked.

"Because I am not coming to school this afternoon," returned Harty.

"Another half-holiday," said Bobby; "you had a whole one yesterday!"

“Well, is it any business of yours?” said Harty rudely.

“It’s well to be you!” said Bobby Fisher, as he hurried on his way to school, rather discontentedly. If he had only known, he would not have envied Harty Winwood!





## CHAPTER IX.

### IN THE WOOD AT MIDNIGHT.

DID any boy ever really enjoy playing truant? I believe not. Certainly no good boy ever did. You will say, No good boy ever did play truant. That is true. If Harty had been always good he would not now have been setting off towards the woods, instead of accompanying Bobby Fisher to his place in the class.

Yet Harty was not a bad boy! I suppose a great many girls and boys, who are generally good, do still have their fits of naughtiness, and one of these had now come upon Harold Winwood. He began by unreasonably asking his schoolmaster for a half-holiday against all rules. Then he was vexed at his master not only refusing to grant his request, but writing to Aunt Charlotte to tell her of the circumstance. He knew he had been wrong, and merited his aunt's rebuke. But instead of owning it, and striving to atone for his fault by increased attention to his duties, he chose to consider himself an injured

person. He was blaming others, yet in his own mind he really knew he alone was wrong.

This is a miserable state to be in. No boy or girl can be happy with such thoughts within them. Truly, Harty now found it so. He had stayed away from school to annoy his aunt and the master. He did not want to meet the eyes of his schoolfellows, to whom he had boasted he was going to have another half-holiday. He feared their jeers. He did not want to hand that note to his master, with his aunt's written request that her nephew should be allowed no holiday but of her asking. Well, he had got his half-holiday; and what should he do with it?

He did not care to go up to the woods to join the Fairbairn party, who, of course, did not now expect him. James would be with them, and there would be sure to be questions and explanations.

He thought he would go down to the meadows by the river. There were always some persons fishing there, or a boat might be out, belonging to the people at the Hall, who kept one chained at the foot of the steps leading up to their lawn. Then he remembered that Aunt Charlotte often went there to walk with Dolly when lessons were over. He would be seen there. Meanwhile he sulked, and lingered, and did nothing particular till an hour had passed. He wished he had gone into school with Fisher. It would all have been over by now, he thought, and he none the worse. He almost made up his mind he would go as it was. Then he thought again of Aunt Charlotte's



note to the master, and in his ill-temper he said, "I shall just give them all a fright; I won't go back till it is quite dark."

As he spoke he sauntered up the lane, round by the field, where the cricket match had been held. He could not get into the field here, so he had to make a circuit to get to the wood, which he entered at a point some distance from that part where he had made one of the party the day before.

The shade of the wood was pleasant after the hot sun in the lane. But Harty found it dull work, all by himself. He was fond of games, and the companionship of his fellows, and he yawned as he lay down at the foot of a large tree. "What should I be doing now if I were in school?" he said to himself. "I know. I should be just doing that piece out of Roman history."

And he actually began saying over the passage, just as he would have done had he been in school. A queer way of enjoying a half-holiday! But does any one ever *enjoy* that which is got unfairly? I think not. If Harty had gained that half-holiday as he had many,—as a favour fairly granted,—he would now have been racing, shouting, and thoroughly enjoying himself among the trees or over the greensward. And here he was, skulking and hiding himself, and very far from happy. As he lay beneath the tree, looking up through the thick screen of leaves, he spied a squirrel or two, leaping from bough to bough,

quite unmindful of the boy who lay so quietly below them.

They brought to Harty's mind the tales Peter Pranks had told them, of the country where the monkeys leaped about wild, and the gay parrots flitted through the trees. "How I wish I could go and see all those things!" said he to himself. "How fine it would be, to hear a real lion



roar here among the woods! It's very nice here, but so *tame*. When I am a man, I won't stop in England; I'll go and see all those wonderful countries where the volcanoes are, and the earthquakes, and—and—" Harty was murmuring these words half to himself as he gradually dozed. Overcome by the heat of the day, and his weariness of mind, he soon fell fast asleep.

The squirrels came down from their high perches, and gambolled near; they leaped to and fro over his outstretched hands; they even dropped the nutshells plentifully about his hair, but the creatures' movements were so light, the boy never felt them.

The birds overhead sang their farewell to the sun, as its light slowly faded away, and left the wood in deeper shadows. The tiny flowers folded their sweet blossoms, and drooped their pretty leaves, as though they slept upon their stalks; the birds tucked their tuneful heads away in their feathery nightcaps; and the saucy squirrels betook themselves to their snug bedchambers, in the hollow trees and mossy banks. The woods grew more and more silent; night had fallen over the earth, and still Harty slept on.

At home he had not, for some time, been missed. After lessons were done, Aunt Charlotte had taken Dolly with her to visit a lady who had lately come to live near them, and who had some little daughters about Dolly's age. The time had passed quickly; for the little girls had abundance of toys; above all a beautiful doll, larger and more lovely even than the lost Miriam.

Dolly really had enjoyed herself. Only once a pang of regret crossed her mind, when she remembered her farm-yard, the mechanical toy, which would have given such amusement to her new friends, and which she could not now even show them, as it was forfeited through yester-

day's sad error. But she told them all about it, and they were amazed and interested, and they had begged their mother to let Peter Pranks come to their house, to show his wares, when next he came round.

They took tea at the house of their new acquaintance, and then they were prevailed on to stay till the cool of the evening, to walk home. So it happened that it was quite dusk when Aunt Charlotte and Dolly returned. Then there were the walking things to be taken off, and the lamp to get lighted, and, as Harty was often out roaming the garden till dusk, neither his sister nor aunt thought of asking for him, till, when Jessie came in to close the shutters, Aunt Charlotte said, "What time did Harty come to his tea, Jessie?"

The girl seemed surprised. "He has not been in to tea at all, ma'am," she said. "I thought he had gone to Mrs. Fairbairn's maybe."

"Has he not been indoors at all?" asked Aunt Charlotte, with surprise.

"No, ma'am, I have not seen Master Harty since dinner-time."

Dolly looked at her aunt uneasily. She knew what a bad temper her brother had been in at dinner-time, and her first thought was that Harty had stayed away from his tea in a pet, not knowing that she and her aunt were from home. For, as a rule, Master Harty liked having the tea-table all to himself; when he played at being master, and made Jessie bring him jam or cake, which

she was not loath to do, Harty being a favourite with her.

"Shall I go and look for him in the garden, aunty?" asked the little girl.

Aunt Charlotte looked at her watch. "No, my dear," she replied; "I will send James, but we will give Harty one quarter of an hour more. Perhaps he went up to see Freddy Fairbairn after school."

Another quarter of an hour passed in silence. Aunt Charlotte was reading, Dolly was learning her lessons for to-morrow, but she could not fix her attention on what was before her. The tender little heart was pained for her brother. She feared he was still rebellious, still sullen; and there was a terrible dread in her mind that, should Harty continue to misbehave himself, he would incur the punishment more dreaded by both the children than any other which could have been inflicted.

"I shall tell your father when I write to him," or "Your mother will hear of this in my next letter."

These were the sentences which, coming from Aunt Charlotte, had power to bring the culprit to a sense of duty, more than any threat she could have held out.

She had not occasion often to actually put it into practice; for usually the very idea of it was enough. Tears, and earnest promises of amendment, had generally sufficed to turn the good aunt from her resolve.

But now, thought poor Dolly, Harty did seem so naughty, if he were still sulking. And there was something

too dreadful in the idea of having one's bad behaviour made known all across the sea, to the dear father and mother, who were always thinking of their children, and hoping and praying to see them very soon, well, and good, and happy.

The little girl sat with tears in her eyes, anxiously listening, and longing for her brother's footstep on the gravel, outside the long window, by which they usually entered from the garden. For it stood open all day long in the summer-time.

Suddenly she started up. "Here he is, aunty!" she exclaimed, and ran to the window.

There were indeed footsteps; but those of several persons, and Bannock's bark made itself heard a moment before he bounded into the room, and came rubbing his great head against Dolly, and licking her hands.

Tom and Freddy Fairbairn entered the room.

"We have brought Bannock back, Miss Winwood," said Tom to Aunt Charlotte, "and we thank you very much."

"Did you find any one, or anything in the wood?" she questioned.

"Not a trace," replied Freddy.

"Well, no, unless you can call some old shoes and rags any trace," returned Tom, laughing.

"They seem to have got clear off with the musical box and your doll," continued Freddy. "It was a singular choice to make, wasn't it, for a thief?" he added.

"Where is Harty?" asked Dolly anxiously.

Freddy and Tom looked surprised.

"Where is he?" said the latter. "He was not with us."

"But has he not been to your house this afternoon?" asked Aunt Charlotte.

"No, indeed," replied Freddy, "I wish he had."

"Have you been home since you left the wood?" asked Aunt Charlotte.

"Oh! yes," returned the boys, almost together. "We sent James home, and told him we would bring Bannock home ourselves."

"We took the good doggy home, to give him water and a jolly feed," said Freddy.

"What time was that?" asked Aunt Charlotte.

"About six o'clock," replied Tom.

"It struck six just as we crossed the home field," added Freddy.

"Harty leaves school at five," said Dolly, who was growing very pale. Her fancy began to picture all sorts of things which might have happened to her brother.

"Hasn't he been home to tea?" asked Tom Fairbairn.

"No," replied Aunt Charlotte. She rose, and rang the bell.

When Jessie came she said, "Tell James to come here."

James was the man who worked in the garden, attended to the chickens and the pony, and was very

useful in the house, though he was very lame, and deaf besides.

"James," said Aunt Charlotte; "go round the garden and look for Harty. You had better take your lantern and look into the summer-house and the tool-shed; he may have fallen asleep there, it was very hot this afternoon."

The Fairbairn boys started up, and would have gone too; but Aunt Charlotte desired them to remain.

"Harty is touchy sometimes," she said, "and might not like to be caught napping."

She smiled, but still she looked uneasy. Aunt Charlotte believed, as Dolly did, that her nephew was sulky, and had hidden away somewhere. Her worst fear was that he might take a bad cold from sleeping in the night air; that alone made her vexed. But when James returned, and said he could see nothing of Master Harty, either in the garden or shrubbery, all present began to look amazed.

Dolly's face was quite pale, and as she drew close up to her aunt's side the tears gathered in her eyes, and her little hands were tightly clasped.

"Auntie, where can Harty be?" she whispered.

James still waited.

"You must go over to Mr. Merton at once, James," said his mistress, and ask what time Harold Winwood left school. "He may have been kept in late, my dear," she added to Dolly, as the man left the room.



"Oh! Miss Winwood, he would not be kept in so late as this," cried Freddy.

"I know that, of course," replied Aunt Charlotte, hastily, "but he might have left late, and gone home with one of his schoolfellows. Do not look so terrified, my dear," she said to her little niece. "We shall soon find your brother, he cannot be far off."

In less time than could have been believed possible James was back again. Harold Winwood had not been to school that afternoon at all!

Then, indeed, Aunt Charlotte looked grave and alarmed.

Dolly burst into tears.

"Oh! Harty, dear Harty, where can he be!" she cried: her aunt in vain attempted to comfort her.

Tom and Freddy hurried off, to take the strange tidings to their home.

\* \* \* \* \*

When Harty awoke it was pitch dark. For a moment he had forgotten where he was. He tried to rise, and found his limbs stiff, with lying on the damp earth. He stumbled to his feet, and tried to feel what was around him. Nothing but the black darkness, and the wind moaning in the trees.

He thought it must be a dream.

"Aunt Charlotte!" he cried.

"Dolly!"

No answer. Only the rustling of the leaves overhead.

He rushed wildly forward for a minute. His head struck violently against a tree, and he fell, stunned and bleeding, to the ground.





## CHAPTER X.

### FOUND IN THE POND.

THE next morning all Sherway was astir, almost as soon as it was light. The news had spread that Harold Winwood, the gay, handsome boy at the Cottage, had disappeared; and every one was wondering, and forming some conjecture to account for the strange occurrence.

It had been all Jessie's work to answer the calls made at the cottage door, to learn if anything had been heard of the missing lad. She stood now, after her last reply in the negative, holding a consultation with James.

"Wherever do you think he can be now?" she asked, for the twentieth time; and for the twentieth time James shook his head.

"Ay, it's hard to tell," he said; "Master Harty was always a rare one for wanderings and travels, leastways for tales of them. I mind how he would go on about old Pranks, the pedlar's stories; and Jacky Boucher, the old soldiering man that keeps the lodge-gate at the Hall, told me he believed as our young master was safe to go

off to sea, or to the wars some day, 'for,' says he, 'his head is full of nought else.'"

"But lor," put in Jessie, "the poor lad can't be gone to sea, with nothing on but his school jacket and cap. Why he hasn't taken not a second pocket-handkerchief with him."

James, having no answer ready, shook his head again, in silence.

"Poor mistress hasn't been to bed all night," resumed Jessie, "and dear Miss Dolly, though we did get her to bed, I don't believe closed an eye till morning. I heard her sobbing as if her heart would break. They were so fond of one another those two poor dears."

"Eh, we'll all miss him dreadfully," said old James gloomily, "though he was a bit tiresome and masterful at times, poor laddie."

"Lor, James!" said Jessie, "don't go to speak like that. As if we were never to see the dear young master again in life." And she gave a sniff, as though going to cry.

James shook his head, and was about to open his mouth, when a party of men appeared round the corner of the lane leading to the cottage.

"Here is Mr. Fairbairn and the other gentlemen as have been up, scouring the woods, since day-break," said the old man, moving slowly to meet them. "I judge by their looks they've had no luck," he said as he went.

"No, James," was Mr. Fairbairn's answer to the man's inquiry. "We have found nothing; and now we have come to another conclusion. It is very, very sad. But it seems only too probable."

Then he gave some directions to the servant-man, who departed into the village, and the party went on to the Cottage.

It was Mr. Fairbairn, Captain Crowe, and another gentleman, who with Tom Fairbairn, had undertaken to go through the wood, with the first morning light, to ascertain if by the strictest search any clue could be found to the mysterious disappearance of their young neighbour. Aunt Charlotte met them on the threshold of the cottage.

She was very pale, her eyes were red with sleeplessness and weeping.

"I thank you all so much for your great kindness," she said. "Come in pray, and take breakfast."

"We will," returned Mr. Fairbairn, "for we came straight on here, to give you the result of our search. I wish it were more satisfactory, but we must not despair, you know."

The kind man spoke cheerfully. He wished to keep up the poor lady's spirits, for he was beginning to fear the search would be a long one.

"I suppose your little niece is not awake," asked Captain Crowe.

"She did not sleep all night," was the reply, "and I

am thankful to say she is sleeping now. Poor child, I fear she will be ill, if this suspense continue."

"It is the suddenness of the affair that is so remarkable," said the other visitor. "If the poor boy had expressed any intention of leaving home, or made any preparation."

"He took nothing with him, did he?" asked Captain Crowe.

"Oh, no," replied Aunt Charlotte. "He quitted the cottage to go to school as usual."

"Might he have returned," said the captain, "and made up a bundle? I have known so many boys smitten with a desire for adventure and a sea life, who have left happy homes."

"I have looked through Harty's clothes," replied the lady, "there is not a single article missing."

She sighed deeply.

"Coming so close upon the theft in the tent would make one associate the idea of the gipsies having a hand in it," remarked the visitor.

"Harty is too big a boy to be carried off, like a basket, or a baby," said Captain Crowe, "besides to what purpose should they meddle with the lad? He would have raised an alarm. No, I incline to the belief the young gentleman has taken himself off for a time, and when the fit is over he will come back penitent enough."

"I hope and trust it may be even so," said poor Aunt Charlotte; "but I fear—"

She was interrupted by the entrance of Dolly, who came flying into the room, her hair all wild about her face; her eyes swollen, her face white as snow.

"Aunt, aunt!" she panted, out of breath, and not even noticing the strangers present, "what are all those men round the pond in the meadow? What are they doing? What have they found?"

Jessie was visible just outside the door. She was crying as though her heart would break.

Aunt Charlotte rose in alarm, and took Dolly in her arms. "My dear child, what is it? what is the matter?" she asked, and she looked at Mr. Fairbairn.

"Do not distress yourself, my dear," said that gentleman, laying his hand kindly on Dolly's head. "I did not think to have troubled you in the matter," he went on to Aunt Charlotte, "but I deemed it right to have the pond dragged."

Aunt Charlotte gave a sharp cry, but she was a strong woman, and she restrained her own distress of mind to comfort her little niece.

"Oh, he isn't drowned!" exclaimed Dolly, through her tears. "You don't think Harty is drowned?"

"No, my dear, no; we do not think so," said Captain Crowe; "still it is only right to search everywhere. You must try and be brave, my dear little girl, and help us to look for your brother. Try now, and think whether you ever heard him say anything about going to sea, or running away from home."

Dolly calmed herself, and with sobs made answer—  
“Harty said often, when he was a man he would sail away to foreign countries; and he always liked looking at ships, and reading about them.”

“He had not been saying anything of the sort the day he left; yesterday, that is?” asked the captain.

“No,” was Dolly’s reply; “he was a little cross, and did not want to come to dinner,” she added reluctantly.

There was a pause. Then the little girl went on—

“I don’t believe Harty would ever run away from home on purpose, like that.” The tears broke forth again, at the thought that the brother she loved could voluntarily have quitted the home, where they had been so happy.

Aunt Charlotte beckoned to Jessie, and bade her take Dolly upstairs.

“Get dressed, my dear; and then you must eat some breakfast, or you will be ill.”

The poor child left the room with the servant.

Breakfast was now over, and the gentlemen rose, and walked out together to the garden, where they stood consulting together on what measures should next be taken.

The next arrival was good Mrs. Fairbairn, who came up to the cottage to comfort Aunt Charlotte and her little friend Dolly, if, indeed, comfort were possible.

“I think with Dolly,” she said, after some conversation, “that Harty was not likely to have left home in that way. He was too fond of his sister and yourself,



and, indeed, too kind and good a boy to do what would cause so much distress."

"That is my own opinion," replied the aunt; "but then how else can his disappearance be accounted for?"

"You say he was in an ill-temper yesterday, and did not go to school it seems. Could he have played truant, and wandered away to Clumpton, or down by the beach, and got too far to come back last night?"

"It may be so," said Aunt Charlotte, with a sigh.

"You may depend it is so, and that he will turn up by-and-by, footsore and weary."

Mrs. Fairbairn spoke so hopefully that her hearers could not but gather comfort from her words.

Dolly had returned to the room, and, at her aunt's request, was endeavouring to eat some breakfast. But it was evident she had no appetite.

Aunt Charlotte left the room to speak to the girl Jessie.

Mrs. Fairbairn took the opportunity of saying a few words to Dolly. "You must be brave, my dear, and not add to your aunt's trouble. I hope and believe your brother will be soon found; but, if he should not, you will try and not grieve so much as to make yourself ill, and give more cause of anxiety."

Dolly promised she would. She did succeed in eating some breakfast, and then, as was her custom, she gathered the crumbs and fed the birds on the lawn, and helped Jessie to carry the breakfast things to the kitchen.

But all the time there was heavy sorrow at her heart ; one thought troubled her, which was also distracting the mind of poor Aunt Charlotte.

It was the day on which the usual letter was written to India.

"What *can* I say to my brother ?" the poor lady spoke aloud to Mrs. Fairbairn, of the anxiety that was oppressing her. "I have never missed one week in writing to them since the children have been with me. How am I to tell them ?—how convey to them the dreadful news that their boy is lost. The terrible anxiety which I cannot relieve, even should he return to-morrow ! It would drive them mad !"

"Do not tell them at all," was Mrs. Fairbairn's reply.

"What ! write as if nothing had happened ?"

"Certainly *not* !" responded her friend. "If you wrote you must tell all. It would be deceitful not to do so ; but do not write at all ; simply let the day pass over, and send no letter."

"It will make them anxious. It has never happened before."

"Of two evils choose the least," remarked Mrs. Fairbairn. "They may remember the saying that 'No news is good news.' They may think you have been neglectful, or that some accident has delayed your letter ; at any rate, they can form no apprehension so painful."

"Yes, you are right," interrupted Miss Winwood.

"What would they say, what will they think, when they know the truth! I feel as if I were all to blame."

"You must not think so," said her friend, taking her hand. "I am sure no one who has known your ever-watchful care of the children could for a moment attribute blame to you, whatever may happen."

At that moment there was a stir among the group on the lawn. James had hastily entered the garden, and the gentlemen went to meet him. He held something in his hand, all wet and dripping. He came on towards the house, after speaking to Mr. Fairbairn, and approached the window. Aunt Charlotte clasped her hands in an agony of dread. Dolly, with a white face and trembling limbs, clung to her aunt's side. Mrs. Fairbairn looked anxiously towards the approaching figure of James. What new discovery had been made? Surely her husband would have interfered to prevent any shock to the poor anxious ones!

James came up to the window, and stood just outside, with his dripping burden. "It's all finished, ma'am. They've found nothing—only *this*!"

"This" was nothing less than poor Miriam, the lost doll—a very different sight indeed to that which she had presented on the day of the cricket match. Drenched with the mud and weeds of the pond, most of which James had certainly cleared off; her fair hair all matted, her beautiful blue dress soddened, and sticking close to her form; one waxen leg wrenched out, and hanging

loose ; the lace hood in shreds, the pearl necklace gone, only the thread which had held the beads still around her neck.

It was but a wreck of the once-prized doll. At another time Dolly would have been filled with grief at the sight, but now deeper sorrow was at her heart. It was indeed a relief when she beheld what the man carried. She had so dreaded something worse. Still the little girl could not bear the idea of her poor favourite being utterly cast away ; and when James made as though he would have carried it off to the destination of all rubbish, poor Dolly involuntarily stretched out her hand for it.

"Take it to the kitchen, James," said Aunt Charlotte. "Jessie shall clean it for you, my dear," she said.

"Mother sent it to me," Dolly murmured ; as a reason, perhaps, why she should prize the poor wreck.

She followed James to the kitchen.

"It will divert her mind a little," said Mrs. Fairbairn. "I wonder how the doll could have come in the pond!"

"There is a mystery somewhere," returned Aunt Charlotte, whose mind felt strangely relieved to learn that the pond had been dragged without any such terrible result as the operation seemed almost to forebode.

"Harty was so fond of the water," said Mrs. Fairbairn.

"Yes, but he swam well," returned Aunt Charlotte ; "and he was not reckless as some boys are."

"Still," urged her friend, "accidents will happen. I

am truly thankful the pond and river have been dragged. It has eased my mind more than I can tell you."

"Ah! you had fears, then," observed Aunt Charlotte, "though you would not own them."

"Perhaps I had, more than even I owned to myself."

The gentlemen now came up to the window. They had arranged a plan of action. Captain Crowe was going at once to the nearest seaport town, to make inquiries among all the vessels whether any lad answering to Harty's description had been seen. Also to give such directions to those in authority as should lead to his being restored to his friends, had any mad freak induced him to try for a berth on board any vessel. Mr. Fairbairn and his sons had resolved once more to search the woods thoroughly, taking with them an old servant-man from the Hall, who had known the surrounding country from a boy, and could, as he said, find his way blindfold to every nook and corner. Mr. Vincent, the visitor, would go into Clumpton, and have bills printed, offering a reward for any information that might lead to the recovery of the missing boy.

Just as they were departing Mr. Fairbairn returned. "Let us take the dog, Bannock, with us," he said. "Those creatures are very sagacious, and will hunt up things by scent that our eyes would never discover."

Bannock was called, but he did not appear. James was questioned. He had not seen the dog that morning.

Round the house and grounds went the man, but no dog was to be found. Another mystery. Bannock was gone! They could not stay to search for him.

"He will turn up in the course of the day," Mr. Fairbairn said.

They all departed on their different ways. Aunt Charlotte and Dolly, too anxious to think of books, work, or lessons, could only sit, listening to every footstep, starting at the least sound, which might be news of their dear Harty.

The day wore on. The party from the wood returned, but they had found no trace. Harty was not there. That was certain. Captain Crowe came back from the seaport town, only nine miles away. He could give no information, though he had made the fullest inquiries, and left the notices agreed upon. Bannock had not been seen. Fresh cause for wonder.

"Could he have gone to look for Harty?" Dolly asked, wonderingly.

It was growing dusk, when a footstep was heard on the gravel, the gate swung to with a bang, and a familiar, piping voice was heard.

"Anybody at home?"

"It is Peter Pranks," cried Dolly.

But she did not run to meet him, as she had been used to do with her brother. The pedlar came up the walk, he turned off to the side door, and was heard speaking to Jessie.

“Is anything the matter? Where are the children? I found this on my road. It is Master Harty’s.”



In an instant Aunt Charlotte was in the kitchen, followed by Dolly.

“What is it!” the lady exclaimed. “What have you found?”

The pedlar held in his hand a cap. Harty’s name was inside: the band and lining were stained with blood!





## CHAPTER XI.

### A DISCOVERY.

"I SHOULDN'T have come up here at all but for that," said Peter Pranks, in answer to the anxious questions which were poured out by the group formed around him. "It was the physic that was wanted badly, I knew, for the sick babies at Dame Morgan's, and an order or two besides, at the Low Farm, that I thought I would bring up at once, especially as I'd have to wait in Clumpton for some lace-work that was ordered to be made, and not quite finished. So this morning I went to the Farm, and then meant to have crossed over the bay, to go by the cliff path to Dame Morgan's cottage. But as one of the farm men was going by the road, and it was company, I went the longest way, and, one thing and another, I stayed about at the village till it was later than I thought; so I was forced to take the cliff path back to get to the Farm again, where I had left one of my packs. It was just half-way down the path, where the sun glinted, I should say, just about the last bit of earth



it lighted up, before sinking, that I spied this cap. It was a queer place to find a boy's cap, unless the boy was pretty close by, and I looked sharp about, thinking the owner might be in hiding to give me a start, as they will do. But I saw no signs of anybody, and then, as I turned the cap over, I was startled to see those letters—Master Harty's name. Well, ma'am, putting one thing and another together, I thought the best thing I could do was to come on here and find out the rights of it."

"It was indeed, Peter," said Aunt Charlotte, in a low, sad tone; "it was quite right, thank you."

"My leg has turned stiff lately," the pedlar went on. "I came on but slowly, else I should have been here before."

"Sit down, pray," said the lady. "You had better stay to-night; James can make a bed for you."

"But, ma'am, about the young master? Surely he has come to no mischief!"

"We don't know, Pranks. We are all in the dark. It is all a mystery."

She ordered some refreshment to be set before the pedlar; then, with Dolly, she returned to the sitting-room, to ponder over this new discovery.

In the kitchen there were many surmises and fresh ideas put forth.

"It is just where the wood overhangs the cliff," said the pedlar, when they asked him where the cap had been found, "about half-way down the path."

"Suppose Master Harty had fallen over the cliff in the dark?" said Jessie.

"Then there would be his body on the beach," said James.

"But the tide might have risen and carried him away?" surmised Jessie.

"The tide never comes as high as that, unless it is the neap tide," said Pranks, "and it is very low just now. Besides, no one could fall from the cliff there; it is the coast-guard station just above, and their wall comes right down along, far past there."

"You had better tell my mistress all that," said the thoughtful Jessie. "I know she had something dreadful came into her mind, when she saw that cap with the blood on; and poor Miss Dolly will be breaking her heart about it."

"I don't myself believe that we will ever see him again," said James gloomily.

"I wouldn't say that," observed Peter Pranks. "I have known many disappear in a strange sort of way, and turn up again years after."

"Ay, but they would be grown-up people, no doubt," returned old James; "but a lad like this—what could take him away?"

"But if anything had happened to him," said Jessie, "we would surely find something of him, even if it was wild beasts."

"There's no wild beasts in these woods," said James contemptuously.

"There's something," persisted Jessie, "else what's become of Bannock, poor fellow?"

This was the first time the pedlar had heard of the dog's disappearance, and he now listened with much interest.

"That's a sensible beast," he said, "like his poor mother, and his grandmother before him. You may depend he has gone on the tracks of his young master, and if he be above ground he will find him."

"I do pray and hope he may!" murmured Jessie.

There was nothing to be done that night.

Aunt Charlotte had Peter Pranks into her sitting-room, when his supper was over, and questioned him as to every particular of his journey.

Peter assured her it was not possible for anything to have escaped him.

"Though my legs are a bit stiff, my eyes are good as ever," he said. "You may be sure, ma'am, I took note of every nook and corner, after I found that cap. If there had been as much as a tobacco pipe, I should have seen it."

"But it was getting dusk," said Aunt Charlotte.

"So it was, ma'am; but out there on the cliff, facing the west, the light lingers long, and you may take my word for it, if there had been anything to find I would have found it."

"Thank you, Pranks, that will do," said Aunt Charlotte wearily.

When the pedlar had gone, she said, half to herself, "we will have that path searched well by daylight."

Dolly had heard all, and when she went to bed, she lay awake thinking of the strange things that had happened of late.

Her dear brother gone; Miriam found at the bottom of the water! Bannock vanished! And now this terrible discovery of the cap—poor Harty's cap, stained with blood! She lay thinking, and wishing she could do something, if only she knew where to go, or what to do! Harty must be somewhere. Perhaps he was now lying ill, or hurt, and with no one near to nurse or care for him. If only she knew what to do! She fell asleep at last. When she awoke, the day was just dawning. The golden light came into her room under the blind; the birds were beginning to twitter in their nests. All the world seemed just waking out of its long sleep.

On such mornings as these, Dolly and her brother had been used to rise, before any one else in the house was stirring, and go down to the gardens. Often they would wander away into the field, down by the river, and watch the fish darting hither and thither in the clear stream. Sometimes even they had ventured as far as the beach, and had, together, climbed that very cliff path where the poor boy's cap had been found. So they came round by

the village, through the churchyard, and across the meadow, home.

Thinking and recalling those happy times, the little girl made up her mind she would this morning go for her walk alone.

"I will get as far as the cliff path if I can. It is quite early," she said to herself, "perhaps I may find something. Oh! if dear Harty were to be there. Suppose he had slipped down and hurt himself, and I were to find him, and help him home. Oh! how glad dear aunty would be!"

She dressed herself hurriedly, and, as she was accustomed to do, without any noise; she opened her bedroom door, and went softly down the stairs.

No one was up. When she reached the lobby where the big straw mat lay, which was Bannock's place always at night, she recalled the way the dear old dog was wont to frisk and caper round her, and how glad he was to join their happy morning walks.

"It seems as though no one was left but me," sighed the poor child, as she passed out into the morning sunshine.

Pretty, lonely little figure, moving slowly across the lawn, down the bank between the strawberry beds, over the little wooden bridge, and so into the meadow. The pigeons were cooing on the roofs of the dove-cots. The cows lifted their grave old faces, and looked at Dolly, as though they wondered to see her pacing along all alone

so soberly. She who was wont to run and jump and sing.

"It is all so different now," she sighed to herself.

She skirted a corner of the wood, and so came out upon the cliff path, much lower down than where Pranks had found the cap.

A coast-guardsmen, up on the cliff above, saw the little bit of blue and white moving down below, and thought at first it must be a large bird of bright plumage. But, with his glass, he soon made out the figure to be that of a fair-haired child.

"What can she be doing down there, at this early hour?" he said to himself; "I will keep my eye on the little thing, and see she comes to no harm."

But there was no harm likely to come to the careful Dolly, quietly picking her steps, and looking about under every bush and fern for, indeed, she hardly knew what. Little by little she ascended the slope, resting at times on the natural seats formed by the hollows in the banks where the low broom-trees and hawthorn grew so plentifully. Then she would look wistfully out to sea, where a white sail or two were glancing in the morning sun.

"Oh! if father and mother were only coming home in that ship," she said to herself; "and yet, it would be dreadful for them to come, and not find Harty with us!"

Once it entered into her head, "Suppose Harty had gone to try and get to India, where they are."

But she shook her head to herself at the idea. "He would not leave aunty and me so."

She had nearly reached the top of the path, and had sat down for a minute to rest under a big thorn-bush which overhung the spot. A bit of something white at her foot attracted her notice, and she stooped to pick it up. It was an envelope, very much crumpled and soiled, but it seemed not to have been opened. Dolly smoothed it out, and her eye caught the address. It was that of Harty's schoolmaster, and the handwriting was her aunt's.

The little girl remembered hearing of the note her aunt had written for Harty to take to Mr. Merton, the day of his disappearance. Her heart beat wildly. It must have been dropped here by her brother. He had then been here! Where was he? Could he be hiding near, still sulky, perhaps. Oh! if it were only so! She rose to her feet, and mounted on the top of the hillock where she had been sitting; she gazed around in all directions. She called aloud, "Harty! dear Harty! are you here?"

In vain she listened for any answer.

She toiled on the top of the cliff path; but she saw no one, except the coast-guardsmen, who bade her good-morning civilly.

Then wearily, yet with hurrying feet, she made her way home, anxious to impart her small discovery to Aunt Charlotte. The note, being opened, proved to be the one

their aunt had written to the schoolmaster, and which poor Harty had, alas ! never delivered.

But nothing could be learned from that, save that the boy must have been in the neighbourhood of the cliff, and the note had been dropped there by him.

The cliff path was explored by more able feet, and hands, than poor Dolly's, but with no better result.

The coast-guardsmen were questioned, but he had neither seen nor heard of any accident near his post.

Every means had been taken to find out what could have become of the missing boy, but in vain.

From the day when Harty left the cottage, in an ill-temper, with everything and every one there, he had never been seen. Bobby Fisher was the last person in the place to whom he had spoken, and poor Bobby had been questioned and cross-questioned, as to what Harold Winwood said ? and how he said it ? and how he looked ? and what he had on ? till he was tired of repeating the same thing perpetually. Bobby, I believe, almost made up his mind it would be better to run away himself, and so get rid of the unceasing questioning to which he was subjected.

The pedlar, Peter Pranks, was a true friend to the distressed family.

"You see, ma'am," he said, "I go about to so many different places, and see so many people, that I have a better chance than most persons of learning something. I'll make my next journey along the coast, among the



fishing villages. I don't know why, but my mind mis-gives me that Master Harty will be heard of somehow in that way. He was always so fond of seafaring tales and ships. Bless his heart! that reminds me, there's his moving toy—the little vessel that he wanted to buy so. I'll leave it here now, for they are ticklish ware to carry about, and, please God! ma'am, he'll be here, amusing himself with it, when I come again."

"You are very good, Peter," was all Aunt Charlotte could say.

"You've all been kind to me, ma'am—the little master and miss too—at all times. I don't forget kindness, and you may depend on me to do all I can. If Master Harty is in England—ay, maybe if he is out of it—we'll find him yet."

So good old Peter departed on his way. The days went on, and still no tidings. One morning, with the letters, came one Dolly well knew the appearance of.

"It is from India, aunty—from mother," she said timidly; and she stood by her aunt's side, anxious to hear the loving messages of her dear parents.

Aunt Charlotte gave a little cry as she read the first lines of the letter.

"They are coming home!" she exclaimed. "Dolly, your father and mother were to leave India soon after this was written. We are to send no more letters. They will soon be home. Oh! what shall I do?—what shall I do?"

The poor lady with difficulty restrained her tears. It

was Dolly now who put her little arms around her neck and comforted her.

"Dear, dear aunty, don't cry—don't. Perhaps dear Harty may be home again by then. And it was not your fault. It wasn't anybody's fault, was it?"

The good little thing had learned to control her own sorrow not to grieve her aunt. She could not help feeling joy in her heart, at the thought of seeing her dear mother and father again; yet she could not forget what terrible grief theirs would be, when, expecting to see their bonnie boy, who had written such letters to them, and whose progress had so delighted them, they should be met with the dreadful tidings that he was *lost*! She took her book and went out to the garden—not to sit under the old beech on the lawn. She had never done that since the day her brother had gone away.

Dolly passed down the strawberry walk, out of sight of the house, and seated herself there, with the book she was trying to read; but it was a useless attempt. It was that very picture-book the children were turning over when this story began. Dolly was thinking of that bright, happy day, and of how different all seemed now. Suddenly she heard a low, pitiful whine, and, looking up, she beheld some creature—she hardly knew what it was—making vain attempts to spring over the little stile which separated the garden from the meadows. She looked over. It was a dog—surely she knew it; yet so covered with mud, so worn, so torn, and wretched-looking,

that it was with doubt and dismay she uttered the word,—

“Bannock !”

Bannock it was. The poor animal knew the voice, and faintly wagged his tail, and again made an effort to leap the stile, but fell back, unable to accomplish it, uttering that pitiful whine.

In a moment Dolly had flown to the cottage.

“James ! Jessie ! aunt ! here is Bannock !”

James was in the garden on the other side. In a few minutes he was following the little girl to the stile.

He quickly hoisted poor Bannock over, and then was seen the pitiable plight in which the poor dog had returned.

“He has been tied up,” said Dolly ; “see, he has a piece of rope round his neck !”

“Ay, and starved too,” James added ; “his bones are almost through his skin !”

Jessie quickly appeared, with meat and water. The poor dog wagged his tail and looked up at those around, but he did not seize upon the food like a starving dog might be expected to do.

“He has something in his mouth !” cried Dolly ; “what is it ?”

James took hold of the object the dog held between his teeth. It looked more like a big stone, or a piece of mud, than anything else.

As the man touched it the dog growled. He lay down

with his nose between his paws, one eye longingly cast towards the food, yet he seemed unwilling to relinquish his booty.

At that moment Aunt Charlotte came from the house, and joined the group.

The dog went towards her, limping in his walk. He laid his burden at her feet, and, looking up in her face, uttered a mournful howl.

"It is a boot!" cried Dolly.

"A boy's boot!" echoed Jessie.

"It is Master Harty's boot!" said James, who had taken it in his hand, and was hurriedly rubbing the mud off with which it was coated, before putting it into the outstretched hand of his mistress.

"My dear boy! my poor boy! where has this been? where has the dog found it?" cried Aunt Charlotte.

Bannock, as though he had now finished his task, was devouring the food, and, having made an end of it, retired to his old place—the mat in the porch.

He turned round and round, as dogs do, preparing to settle; but, as if something crossed his dog-mind, he suddenly lifted up his head, and again howled dismally. Finally he lay down, and was at once sound asleep.

The group stood looking at the poor animal.

"He is rarely tired out!" said James.

"If only he could speak now," put in Jessie, "and tell us where he has been!"

"His feet are regular worn and sore," said the man;

"and see! that rope has been gnawed through to get loose. You may depend he has been tied up; but he has got free, and has come miles, carrying that shoe in his mouth, like to tell us he had found traces of the young master. Ay, if he could but speak!"

The boot was soddened with water and caked with mud, and there were marks all over it, where poor Bannock's teeth had held it, as he carried it on his journey—who could say from where?

By-and-by James came in to speak to Aunt Charlotte.

"I have been cleaning and brushing that poor beast's coat a bit, ma'am," he said, "and I find a deal of tar stuck up in the hair of him. It seems to me he has been down among the shipping somewhere, and who knows but he has been on the tracks of the young master?"

Aunt Charlotte had been writing letters. She now called for Jessie and said to them,—

"I have made up my mind what I shall do. I can stay here no longer, sitting still and wearing out my heart in waiting and hoping. I shall go and seek the dear boy myself. I will leave no means untried, and I will not give up the search till I know whether he is dead or alive. If he is alive, I will find him."

"Oh! aunt, you will not leave me here," cried Dolly; "take me with you—take me!"

"My dear child," said her aunt, as she took her in her arms, "there will be tiring journeys to make, unknown

perils perhaps. I do not even yet know where I may have to seek him."

"Only take me! only let me go with you, aunty. I don't care what fatigue, I don't mind what dangers—only let me go!"

Her aunt could not deny the girl's earnest request. The hasty preparations were soon made. Kind Mr. Fairbairn promised to see that all went on right at the cottage. Jessie and deaf old James would keep everything in order. So the next day they set out—the aunt and her little faithful companion, Dolly—to search for their dear wanderer, the missing, wilful, but beloved Harty.





## CHAPTER XII.

### ON THE TRACK.

It was a bright, beautiful morning when Dolly and her aunt took leave of their pretty home to start on their travels. The little girl had been round the garden, for the last time, bidding farewell to the place where she had been so happy.

"You must keep up your heart, Miss Dolly," said Jessie. "Who knows but we may have news to send you of Master Harty in a day or two? Why, he may come home while you are away looking for him."

"If anything of the sort should happen," said Aunt Charlotte, "you must go up at once to Mr. Fairbairn. He knows where to write to me, and we should soon be back again."

There was terrible work to keep back poor Bannock, who followed close at their heels, during all the preparations, as though he quite understood their intention, and did not mean to be left behind.

"It would not be possible to take him, my dear,"

said Aunt Charlotte, in answer to Dolly's wistful look. "We shall be going by rail, and boat, and coach. Indeed I hardly know yet where we shall go, and the poor dog would be sadly in the way. Look well to him, James. I know you will be kind to the poor fellow."

Then the chaise came up which was to take them to the railway station, and away they went. Dolly was very sad and silent on the first part of the journey; but when the train had started, she spoke for the first time.

"Where are we going to now, aunty?"

"Well, my dear, I have a fancy that poor Harty must have gone away that day in a pet, and perhaps wandered further than he intended, and then got ashamed to come home, and has been stopping in some fishing village, helping with the boats. You know how fond he was of the sea."

"Yes," returned Dolly, "and they said Bannock had been among the boats. But, aunt, if the dog had found Harty, wouldn't he have stayed with him, and not have come back?"

"He might have been driven away by some one else," returned her aunt.

"And the boot—how could Harty be going without his boot?" questioned Dolly.

"It is hard to say indeed," returned her aunt; "but as the poor boy had no money with him, he could not have gone far; and I have made up my mind to go to all the fishing villages, a few miles along this coast, and



make inquiries quietly. I am more likely to find out in that way, if there is anything wrong, than men would be who might make a great fuss and terrify people, so that they would refuse to answer questions."

"Shall we be home again, aunt, by the time father and mother return?" was Dolly's next question.

"I intend to go to Southampton," replied her aunt, "and meet them when the ship comes in. If, please God, we have found dear Harty, it will be a pleasant surprise for them; if not, I could break the dreadful news to them better so than to let them come home to the cottage. And indeed, my dear, I don't think we could, any of us, endure to live there again, if our dear Harold is really lost to us."

Dolly quite felt the same. In her heart she prayed, as she was always doing, that it might not be so, but that a day might quickly come when her dear brother should be restored to them.

Shortly after the train stopped at a station, and two women got in. Up to this time Dolly and her aunt had had the carriage to themselves. When the strangers came in, Aunt Charlotte, not choosing to talk more, opened a book. Dolly amused herself with looking out at the window. Presently the women began to talk, and the little girl gradually became interested in what they said.

"It was a queer thing that we saw just now," said one.

"Ay, I didn't half like it," was the reply. "It seemed to me there was something wrong."

"I don't believe a father could treat his own boy so," went on the first.

"Besides, why should a son disown his father? The little chap said he wasn't his father."

"Did you see how his poor feet were bleeding?"

"Why he had never a shoe on one of them."

"And no hat nor cap—nothing to cover his head," rejoined her friend.

"I wish I'd had time to follow them up, and see the rights of it."

"Well, it's hard to know what to do. It is awkward interfering between people; and, if it turned out to be father and son, you see, we'd have been all in the wrong."

"Anyway, the man looked a brute of a fellow. He shoved the poor little chap along; if we hadn't been there, I believe he'd have struck him."

"The boy didn't look one of his sort either, did he? I noticed his hands; they were quite white inside, and nice; not like one that had been used to rough work."

Dolly's ears had taken in every word of the women's talk, with increased attention, and now, looking up at her aunt, she saw that her interest had been excited. Aunt Charlotte had closed her book, and, as the last speaker ceased, she said, "Pray excuse me, but may I ask what it is you are talking about. I am seeking a young lad I have lost from home. I heard you speak of one—"

In a moment the women were interested in their turn.

Both speaking together, they interrupted Aunt Charlotte.

"Oh! ma'am, it was a pitiful sight."

"Such a dear, nice-faced lad he was!"

It was some moments before any sense could be made out of what they said. However, one at last gave way to the other, and she told the tale.

"We have been to the market, ma'am; my friend and myself go there every week. We were just coming into the station when a rude fellow pushed before us, and went to get his ticket. He had with him a boy—tall and slim he was—and his face very white, and his eyes red as though he'd been crying. He looked quite eager round the station, as if he might see some one he knew. And we noticed that the man kept hold of his wrist.

"He gave him a pull every now and again, quite savagely; and, says he, 'You shan't run away from me again.'

"Every time he did this he glared and glowered at the lad so, as if to terrify him to be quiet.

"My friend made bold to say to him, 'What makes you want to run away from your father?' and the poor lad looked up and shook his head.

"'He isn't my father,' he said. Then the man gave him a shake, and said, 'Hold your lying young tongue!'"

"We were afraid," put in the other woman, "that it might make it worse for the poor boy if we said any more.

But I'm sorry now we didn't brave all and see into the matter."

"Only we should have been late getting home," rejoined her companion; "and you see, ma'am, we've our children to see after, ourselves."

"You said the boy had no shoe on?" asked Aunt Charlotte.

"Well," returned one of the women, "If I remember rightly, he had but one."

"One shoe, and one boot, I think," said the other. "I know his foot was bleeding, poor little soul, and it was all he could do to keep up with the man, as he limped by his side."

"The brute!" ejaculated her companion.

"Did you see where they went to?" asked Aunt Charlotte excitedly.

The train was now slackening speed, to stop at another station.



"I heard the man ask for a ticket to Marlsdene," said the woman she had addressed.

"It is where the miners and quarrymen do mostly live," said the other.

"And a rough sort of a place, ma'am, if you are thinking of going there alone."

"Heaven help the poor lad if he was going to work among that lot!" added the other.

"It is a chance," said Aunt Charlotte hurriedly, "we must not let a chance slip. Come, my dear." She took Dolly's hand to help her from the train. Then, turning to the strangers, she thanked them; and the next minute Aunt Charlotte and her little niece were standing on the platform, while the train sped on its way.

"Oh! aunt," cried Dolly, whom surprise and horror had kept silent till now, "if it should be dear Harty with that dreadful man!"

"At any rate, my dear, we shall soon know," replied her aunt; whose heart beat faster at the idea that she might now be on the track of her dear wanderer.

"Marlsdene is not a very large place, and we shall soon learn whether any strange lad is there."

They had now to cross the line, take a train back to where the women had got in, and thence go on to Marlsdene.

The day had grown cloudy, and a slight rain began to fall. There was no time to get dinner, so fearful was Aunt Charlotte of delay, by which they might lose a

train. They had in their basket some sandwiches and biscuits, and with these they satisfied their hunger.

Neither cared about anything now, but to follow this new track.

Already the little girl began to picture a joyful meeting with her dear brother. How they would take him home, and nurse, and pet him, to make up for all he had suffered.

The train for Marlsdene came up, and they took their seats.

In the third class were to be seen several rough men, dressed in the coarsest clothes, with harsh voices, and using the worst possible language.

Dolly shuddered.

"Fancy aunty, dear Harty being with such dreadful men!" she said.

The train rushed upon its way; but the scenery, among which it passed, was very different to that upon which they had looked during the former part of their ride.

Black-looking, barren heath, and green patches of bare common; the trees became few and fewer. Presently the green ceased altogether. The ways were strewn with ashes, and stones burned white. Masses of rock appeared here and there, pools of stagnant water lay on either side, into which the rain now fell steadily.

It was a desolate place. Dolly's heart felt sad and oppressed. What a spot in which to seek her dear, bright-faced, happy Harty!

The train stopped, and they alighted at a poor-looking, cheerless platform. Most of the travellers consisted of the rough men they had noticed in other carriages; many of them carried small dogs in their arms; others were followed by larger animals, savage-looking bull-dogs, which seemed as though only awaiting a word from their masters to fly at the throat of any one who offended them.

There were a few quiet, decent-looking men and women; but the greater part of those who now crowded the little platform were the smoking, coarse-talking, ill-favoured men who, no doubt, resembled the one described as having in his power the poor pale-faced boy.

Aunt Charlotte drew back to let the mob pass; Dolly, you may be sure, clung closely to her side. Soon the platform was clear, and the people had dispersed on their various ways. One man remained, who seemed to be ticket-taker, porter, and station-master—all in one. At any rate there was no one else visible.

Aunt Charlotte approached this man, who had been looking at the lady and little girl rather curiously; he saw they were strangers there.

"I wish to ask you," said Miss Winwood, "if you have noticed a man come here by train to-day, with a boy having the appearance of a gentleman's son. He is tall and slim, and very pale. He had one boot on, and was in a sad plight."

"I have not seen any such, that I remember," said the man. "How do you know, ma'am, they came here?"

"The man took tickets for this place," Aunt Charlotte answered.

"There are so many men come here," replied the man, "and with boys too, runaways. The young monkeys shirk the work, and are off every chance they get. We don't take much heed, ma'am, of a runaway lad brought back by main force."

Aunt Charlotte took from her bag one of the bills which had been printed, offering a reward for the lost Harold Winwood—this she gave to the man.

"You will understand by this," she said, "who it is I am seeking, and there is a good reward for whoever helps in restoring him to his home."

The man read the bill attentively, and promised to keep his eyes open.

"If you are going among the men on the search, ma'am," he said, "you will find you have a rough lot to deal with."

"I am not afraid," said Aunt Charlotte.

"You had better take the road to the right," said the man, coming to the door of the station to point out the way. "There are a couple of decent fellows live in the two cottages together there, and they will be the most likely to tell you if there is any chance."

Aunt Charlotte thanked him, and went on her way



with Dolly at her side. The rain had ceased falling, but the ground was muddy, and the evening was beginning to close in. At every step their feet were in puddles, and the dreary scene around them was far from encouraging. But they kept on, cheered by the hope of soon finding some clue to the one they sought.

At the door of the first cottage a man was standing with a child in his arms. As soon as Aunt Charlotte had told him the object of her journey, he stepped inside the cottage and gave the child to some one within. Then he came out, and asking the lady to wait a minute, he knocked at the door of the cottage next his own, and soon after it was opened by another man.

The two stood together talking for some little time. Then the second man came up to Aunt Charlotte and spoke.

“Well, ma’am, there is a man has got a boy, just such as you say. He’s been with him about ten days, but yesterday the little chap bolted, and Mike—that’s the man’s name—went after him, and has got him back. We don’t know anything about who or what the lad is, and we don’t want to know. We never interfere with one another’s business, least of all Mike Brady’s, who’s an ugly customer to deal with. But my mind misgave me; it was a hard case, and the lad is not made for such work—”

Here the speaker was interrupted by his companion’s

touch on his arm. A figure appeared on the road coming towards them.

The man hurriedly added, "The long and the short of it is, ma'am, we don't want to be seen in the matter. I wish you success."

"There is a reward—" began Aunt Charlotte.

The man held up his hand, and shook his head.

"Mike Brady—straight down this lane, turn to your right, keep on to the very bottom. Good evening, ma'am."

He went in, the other followed him, and the door was closed. The figure which had been seen in the distance now came up and passed them. It was a woman; dirty and woe-begone in appearance. She stared at the lady and child impudently.

They went on down the lane, where the mud got thicker, and the puddles more frequent. Their feet were quite wet through, and they began to feel very hungry. But their own miseries did not trouble them now.

Both aunt and sister were full of the hope that they were soon to find the dear wanderer. They passed a public-house, where they could hear the rough men, singing drunken songs, and shuffling their feet to a dance tune. Now and again a dog would rush out from a cottage door, and bark fiercely at the strangers. Or a boy or a woman, lolling against a door-post, stared rudely at them. But the lady and the child kept quietly on, taking no notice of any one, till they reached the

end of the lane, where the man had said Mike Brady's home was situated.

Aunt Charlotte tapped at the door of the only habitation visible; a small cottage with a little patch of garden ground in front. A very clean, neatly dressed woman opened the door, and looked very much surprised when she saw who it was that had knocked.

"Does any one named Brady live here?" asked Aunt Charlotte.

"Mike Brady is it, ma'am?" said the woman. "No, not here. He lives at yon place," and she pointed yet further in the distance, over what seemed a waste of black mud, to a desolate-looking dwelling, which appeared more like a rude hut of clay, or a rather large dust-heap, than the home of a human being.

Well might the woman look surprised at the appearance of well-dressed, lady-like visitors, in such a spot, inquiring for Mike Brady.

"It is a bad path, ma'am, though there is cinders underfoot to keep you a bit out of the mud. Would you like the young lady to stop here, till you come back? She is welcome, if you like. I am all alone in the cottage."

She held the door open as she spoke. The glimpse they got of a bright, clean interior, with the stone floor and cheerful fire, was very inviting. Aunt Charlotte looked at Dolly.

"Would you like to rest a little, my dear?" she said.

But the girl shook her head, and held her aunt's hand tighter.

"I will go with you, please, aunt," she said.

Aunt Charlotte thanked the woman.

"Perhaps as we come back we may be glad," she said.

"And welcome, ma'am," returned the woman.

Again she looked curiously at the lady, but she was too civil to make any remark.

On again they plodded. The road of cinders was not so bad as it looked. They found no puddles, and the setting sun was throwing a gleam of light across the waste.

They stood before the cottage of Mike Brady. The door was close shut; all was still. There was no sign of any living thing. The heart of each sank, as the thought crossed them: suppose the man should be out, and the boy they sought with him!

Aunt Charlotte tapped at the door.

No answer.

She knocked louder.

A dog growled.

Then the harsh voice of a man was heard grumbling, and rudely called out, "Come in, whoever ye are."

The lady opened the door and stepped in. Dolly followed close.

A big, ill-favoured man sat smoking by the fire. His features were begrimed with dirt, so were his hands; everything around him was foul, and coarse, and repelling.

At his feet lay an ugly bull-dog, whose red eyes blinked at the strangers, and whose muttered growl broke forth at intervals.

"Well," said Mike Brady, staring at the ladies, never rising from his seat, or even lifting his cap, "what do you want with me?"

"I hear you have a boy here," said Aunt Charlotte, gently yet firmly.

"Well, and if I have. What's that to you?" said the fellow savagely.

"I have lost a little lad. I should like to see him."

"Then you won't," was the reply. And Aunt Charlotte now saw that the man had been drinking, and could hardly speak rationally.

"It can do no harm for me to see this lad," she said, still quietly.

"The boy's my boy," he roared. "He came to me of his own free will."

"I only ask to see him," persisted Aunt Charlotte.

Dolly trembled, for the man looked so fierce and cruel, and the savage bull-dog was growling and glaring out of his red eyes.

"You *won't* see him, so I tell you," shouted the man, as he struck the table with his fist; whereat the dog got up on his bandy legs, and growled fiercely.

Suddenly a loud sobbing was heard, proceeding from an inner room.



" THEN YOU WON'T! "



## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE DESERTER.

DOLLY awoke. The sun was shining. Everything was very still. She raised herself in bed to look round her.

She did not know where she was. All was strange. It was such a tiny room. The curtains, and the bed-clothes were clean, and very white. But it was so different to anything she had ever seen before.

She lifted up her head, to look around more clearly, and struck it against the top of her bedstead. Why, it was like a box, the bed she was in.

"How very funny!" thought the little girl. "And there is a round window, like the round looking-glass in the parlour at home. And what a low ceiling! If I stood on tiptoe I know I could touch it with my fingers. How odd it all is! Perhaps it is a dream."

She fell asleep again, while she was wondering; but in a little while she woke up with such a jump. Her bed was turning right over.

Before she could even utter an exclamation, it turned

on the other side, and then, righting itself, remained comfortably in its former position.

"Oh! dear, how very odd it all is!" said Dolly to herself, and after a few moments she said softly,—

"Aunty."

"I am here, my dear," said a voice, just over her head; and, looking up, Dolly beheld her aunt's kind face looking down upon her. Just as though they were in a cupboard, and Aunt Charlotte was occupying a shelf, above that on which her niece was deposited, snugly tucked in, with sheets and blankets.

"Do you feel better, darling?" asked Aunt Charlotte, as she leaned over, and put her hand down to clasp that of her little niece.

"Yes, aunty, dear, I feel all right, I think. Have I been ill, then?"

"Don't talk now, my child," answered her aunt. "I am going to get up, and then we will talk."

So Aunt Charlotte came down from her strange bed, stepping lightly over Dolly's shelf on to the floor of the tiny bedroom; which really, thought the girl, was not much bigger than that in a large doll's house. Just as she was going to ask a question, the whole room tilted over; Aunt Charlotte's clothes went slipping right away, and if she had not held tight to the bedstead, where Dolly was, she would have gone after them. But the room came right again, and the clothes slid back.

All at once there was a great plash on the tiny



window, as if some one had thrown a pail of water against it.

Dolly looked with amazement.

There was a sheet of dazzling blue outside the window, with feathery sparkles all over its surface.

"Oh, aunt, are we in a ship on the water?" she cried.

"Yes, dear," replied her aunt, who was now dressed, "we are on the water, but not in a ship. Let me help you to dress. You will find it more difficult here than usual."

Her aunt assisted her to the floor. Dolly was surprised to find that she felt weak and tottering. At first she thought it must be the floor, which seemed to sway gently up and down. But when she put her hand to her head, her aunt bade her sit down, and gave her something to drink, after which she felt much better.

"We will go on deck, into the fresh air," said her aunt. "You will be soon well there."

Dolly noticed, to her surprise, that a fresh dress was ready for her to put on.

"Must I not wear my blue serge, then, aunt?" she asked.

"It was spoiled, dear," replied her aunt, "that dreadful night."

"What night?" inquired Dolly, and for some minutes the child had to muster her thoughts.

"I recollect it all now, aunty," she said, when they were seated on deck, watching the beautiful blue water,

which lightly lapped the sides of the little vessel as it sped swiftly along.

"How came I to forget, I wonder. I remember all now. The dreadful man, and his dog, and the boy. Oh! aunty, it wasn't dear Harty after all."

Her aunt shook her head.

"No, dear, no; I am so grieved I took you with me, and caused you all that fear and suffering, all to end in disappointment."

"I did not suffer anything that I know of, aunty. I remember now. The dreadful man threw a match, and the boy called out there was gunpowder, and he lifted me right up, and rushed out of the cottage. That is all I remember, I think. Oh! yes, I recollect you standing by me when I was in bed, and a woman was there, that nice, clean woman you spoke to, I think. You gave me something to drink. Then I fell asleep, didn't I?"

"Yes, dear child," replied Aunt Charlotte. "You had fainted when we were taken to the poor woman's cottage, and then you were feverish, and I feared you would be ill. But it is over now. So you knew it was not Harty?"

"Oh, yes, as soon as he spoke. I knew it was not Harty's voice. But what did you do, aunt? Did the dog hurt any one?"

"Those men whom I spoke to first," was her aunt's reply, "followed us at a distance. They knew what a bad fellow Brady was, and feared some mischief.

They kept us in sight, and when the dog flew at them, and they heard the boy cry out, they rushed in. One of them carried me out of the cottage, and the other held back the dog, which got strangled.

"Did the match go in the powder?" asked Dolly eagerly.

"No, love, no, or we should none of us have been spared. But Brady, in endeavouring to capture the boy, being drunk, knocked over the keg of powder, and some of it must have fallen on his pipe that he threw down, for it exploded and burnt him terribly. He will never be able to work again, or to ill-treat poor boys, even if he lives at all."

"How dreadful!" said Dolly; "and the poor boy, aunt, who was he?"

"He was Brady's nephew, dear. The son of his sister who has just died. The lad had been kept at school, and was well taught, and cared for, while his mother lived. But as soon as his uncle, that terrible Mike Brady, found the poor lad was left at his mercy, without a friend in the world, he fetched him to his own miserable home; took possession of the little money and things which the mother had left her son, and forced the boy to work in the pits. He ran away; Brady fetched him back, and it was then the women met with them."

"Will he ever get hold of that poor fellow again? that cruel uncle!" said Dolly.

"Never, my dear," was the reply. "The boy is now

staying at the cottage, with that kind woman, who will take care of him, till he is fetched away to a school where he will be taught a good trade."

"You planned that, aunty dear, didn't you?" asked the little girl, taking her aunt's hand.

"I know there is such a school, dear, and all I had to do was to write to the master."

"So, after all, aunty, it was a good thing for the poor boy we went to that dreadful man, wasn't it?"

"It was indeed. We never know when, or how, help will come. So we should never despair," returned her aunt.

"And now, aunty, where are we going?" asked Dolly.

"Captain Crowe was so good as to speak to a friend of his, to whom this yacht belongs," answered Aunt Charlotte, "and he has let me have the use of it, to sail round the coast to Westbay, where I mean to stay a few days, making inquiries, the while you get strong and well, I hope."

"How long is it, then, aunty, since that dreadful night?" asked Dolly.

"Three days, love. And now you know all, let us get below to breakfast. I hope you have an appetite."

How the little girl would have enjoyed this trip had only her brother been with them, or even could she have known he was safe and well at home!

The clear, blue water, with the sunlight rippling on

the surface, through which the pretty yacht sailed so smoothly. The long breakfast-table, decked with flowers, and all the good things set forth for their entertainment. And the pretty chime of bells hung in the saloon, on which the boy, who waited on them, played some tunes very cleverly.

It was all so new and lovely to Dolly. But her mind was full of thoughts of Harty, she could only keep saying to herself, "How dear Harty would have enjoyed this! Oh! if he were only with us!"

She knew her aunt must be pondering over similar reflections, and she did not interrupt her with much of her usual agreeable prattle.

Soon their brief voyage was over, and they landed at Westbay.

This was a pretty, quiet little fishing village. Further up the coast were some gentlemen's houses, with handsome grounds about them; but Aunt Charlotte had no interest in these. She still held to the idea that her nephew had betaken himself to the neighbourhood of the boats, and seafaring occupations, he had always been so fond of talking about, and dwelling upon, in tales of adventure.

Miss Winwood had been told of a decent little house; where she would find sufficient accommodation for herself and Dolly, and thither she now went.

When all was arranged with the cleanly, sad-looking widow woman, to whom the house belonged, and the aunt

and niece were taking tea in the pleasant little parlour, Aunt Charlotte said,—

“I shall stay here a few days, my dear, until I can get letters from Sherway, and learn whether any news has arrived. Peter Pranks promised to call at the cottage, if he had anything to tell us. Meanwhile I shall make inquiries quietly, and go from here to other fishing villages, not far off. But until you are stronger you will remain here with this good woman, who will take every care of you.”

Dolly acquiesced. “But I do hope, aunty,” she said, “I shall soon be able to come with you.”

The next morning Aunt Charlotte had risen, breakfasted, and was away on her walk, before Dolly awoke.

The little girl felt so much refreshed that she said to herself, “I shall be able to go with aunt, I am sure, to-morrow.”

She dressed herself, and went into the sitting-room.

The mistress of the house had a nice little breakfast prepared for her.

“Your aunt bade me say, miss, that she should not be late coming home; and that you were to take all the air you could, sitting in the garden. There is a nice seat close to the gate, the trees keep the sun off, and you can see all that passes on the beach below there.”

When Dolly had finished breakfast, she took some knitting she had in her bag, and went to sit in the garden. It was very pleasant. The sea air came in, cool

and fresh; and the beautiful blue of the sky and ocean seemed to meet out far away on the horizon. There was a fine old shaggy, black dog, belonging to the house, which came and sat by Dolly; and, as she patted his head and spoke kindly to him, he put his nose on her lap, and looked up into the little girl's face with such meaning in his honest eyes. It reminded her of dear Bannock; and then she thought of home, and the happy times which now seemed such a long time ago.

The child felt the tears rising, as all these memories came into her mind. The dog, as if he knew her thoughts, and would comfort her, began licking her hand, and the two were soon friends.

Presently Dolly saw a group in the distance which attracted her attention. Something they carried flashed brightly in the sun, and, as they drew near, she saw they were three soldiers. Two carried guns, with bayonets fixed. It was the steel of these which flashed so brightly.

The third had no gun, and he was dusty, and his red coat was torn. He walked with his head bowed down; and as they came nearer, Dolly saw that his hands were fastened tightly together, in front of him, with handcuffs.

All the men looked very hot and tired; and as they passed where the little girl sat, she heard one of the two who carried guns say to the other, "I must have something to drink, or I shall drop."

There was a public-house at the corner, not many

yards from that spot; and the soldier who had spoken went in there, leaving his companion outside with the other man. They both sat down on the bench, that stood almost close on the other side of the hedge, behind which Dolly sat.

For a few minutes the soldier sat awaiting his comrade's return. As he did not come, the man grew impatient, and, in a harsh voice, daring his prisoner to move, he too turned into the public-house.

Dolly could not refrain from peeping over the hedge at the poor fellow who sat on the bench. His head was bowed down, as though he was full of grief. His face was hot, and covered with dust, but his hands were not free even to wipe it. He was very young, but he was so worn with grief, he looked old and ill, and pitiful indeed.

Suddenly he raised his head and saw the eyes of the little girl looking compassionately upon him.

"For pity's sake, miss, would you give me a drink of water?" he said, in a broken voice.

Dolly waited to hear no more. She flew into the room where she had breakfasted, and snatching up the large cup, she filled it with water from the pump, and in two minutes was holding it to the parched lips of the unhappy man, who drank it, oh! so eagerly. Dolly never forgot the look of gratitude, as he lifted his haggard eyes to her face, and said,—

"God bless you!"

She thought of her dear brother, of poor lost Harty,



who might now be also a wanderer, in want of a cup of cold water, or a kindly hand to help him.

"Are you hungry?" she said softly.

"No," the man shook his head as he replied, also in a low voice. "My heart is too sick for hunger. My mother was dying. I ran away to see her once more. I am a



deserter, they say. They are taking me back. My mother will die all alone!—all alone!"

His head sank forward again on his breast. At that moment the two soldiers came from the public-house, and beckoned to their prisoner to rise. They placed

themselves on either side of him, shouldered their guns, and away they marched. Their bright bayonets flashed in the sun, as they wound along the path, and disappeared in the distance.

Dolly felt so sorry for the poor son who had run away from his regiment to see his dying mother. She thought a good deal about it. She would have liked to know whether he could not have got leave to go, if he had asked; and she wondered if the poor mother would really die, or if she might not perhaps get well.

She was pondering these things, when, walking past the spot again, she caught sight of something white hanging upon the hedge. She took it off, and found it to be a very small fine handkerchief, with a curious foreign-looking border, and a letter *M* worked in the corner.

It flashed into her mind she had seen the soldier, as she gave him the water, make an effort to wipe his face, by bending his head forward, and raising his manacled hands together.

"It must be his handkerchief," said Dolly to herself—"and yet it does not look like a man's handkerchief. Perhaps his poor mother gave it to him for a keepsake." She carried the handkerchief into the house and wrapped it in a piece of paper, for she thought to herself that she might happen some day to see that poor unhappy man again, and it would be a comfort to him to have what had been his mother's farewell gift.

"What will aunty say, when I show it to her, I wonder," said the little girl to herself.

But when Aunt Charlotte did return, she brought news

which quickly banished all thoughts of anything else from Dolly's mind.

"Mrs. Fairbairn writes, that Peter Pranks was at Sherway two days ago," she said, "and he had got tidings of a boy who was with a company of travelling showmen. By the description, he has very little doubt of his being our lost Harty. Good old Pranks was about then to start on their track. He had heard of them as far as an inland town, Gratemill, where they were to stay some time. We must hasten on there without delay."

Aunt Charlotte spoke hurriedly, and with anxious hopefulness trembling in her voice. Soon their few preparations were made, and they were once more on their way. Surely this time they were not to be deceived, but all their tedious journeys, and heart-sick longing, were to be ended. They would now surely find the dear missing one, Harty the wanderer.





## CHAPTER XIV.

### DOLLY AND THE BEAR.

JUST as if everything were against their making haste upon the journey they were so anxious to perform, there was no train at all to take them in the direction of Gratemill, from Westbay. A coach, which went only once a day, was the conveyance they were compelled to avail themselves of, for the first part of the way. This, of course, caused a considerable delay; and when they reached the end of the coach journey, they had still some distance to walk before arriving at the railway, which was to convey them to Gratemill direct.

Thus it was very late at night, on the day after leaving Westbay, when Aunt Charlotte and her little niece arrived at the town where Pranks had said the showmen were to be; and where, as they fondly hoped, their dear Harty was at length to be found.

Being so late, of course nothing was to be done, but go and take beds, and find the repose they sadly needed, at the only hotel open to receive them. Not but what the fond Aunt Charlotte, and devoted little sister, would have

gladly given up rest and refreshment for themselves, had it been possible to have gone at once about the business which brought them there, and which always filled their hearts and minds.

But no one could be visited, no inquiries made at that hour ; so to bed they went. And, wearied as they were, both slept soundly ; without even dreaming of what the morrow was to bring forth.

A bright, beautiful day dawned over the smoky town of Gratemill. Dolly, as she looked out from her bedroom window on the narrow streets and stacks of chimneys, was pitying, with all her heart, the people who were compelled to live all their days in such a place. She thought of the clear, calm brightness of the scene about dear Serway ; and, as she so often did now, she said with a sigh,—

“ Shall we ever be there again, all together ! dear Harty and all ! ”

She spoke aloud, though to herself ; and her voice awoke her aunt, who started up hastily, fearing it must be late. When she found it was still early, she proceeded to dress leisurely ; and, while she did so, Dolly told her of yesterday’s adventure, the poor soldier, and the handkerchief she had found.

“ It is in the small blotting-book, wrapped in a piece of paper, aunt,” she concluded.

“ And I packed the blotting-case in the portmanteau, when we left Westbay so hurriedly,” said Aunt Charlotte. “ Never mind, you can show me the handkerchief some other time. It is not at all likely, my dear, you will ever meet with the poor fellow again. Still we never know,”

"But wasn't it shocking?" pursued Dolly, "that he should be taken up, and treated like a prisoner, for going to see his poor mother, who was dying?"

"It does appear so, my dear," replied her aunt. "Still there must be discipline, you know; if one man left the regiment on one pretext, and another on another pretext, there might as well be no soldiers at all."

At that moment the chambermaid came to say breakfast was ready; Aunt Charlotte had ordered it early.

When they had finished breakfast, Aunt Charlotte began her inquiries, and then she learned, to her dismay, that the showman's company had not come to Gratemill, but was located at a village, some miles off, where it would probably remain several days.

"So, Dolly my dear, we must start again at once," said Aunt Charlotte. "I could not wait here, doing nothing, and thinking that all the while our darling boy may be within a few miles of us."

"Oh no! aunty," cried her niece; "let us go, let us go."

Once more they started on their journey. When was it to end? Very soon they hoped. The heart of each beat high with joyous anticipation as they set out on their long walk. There was no direct conveyance from Gratemill to the village which had been named to Aunt Charlotte. The railway would carry them to a point some miles beyond it, whence they must still have walked a considerable distance; but, by short cuts through fields, and across a common, and by some beautiful country lanes; the way which Aunt Charlotte had decided on was a short one in comparison.

Soon the grimy town was left behind; and the beautiful

sights and sounds of sweet country life gathered about them again. Now it was a field of fast-ripening corn ; now an orchard, whose boughs were weighted down with the plums, pears, and apples, almost ready for gathering ; then a stile to climb, and a path to traverse, threading away between hedges of wild rose and honeysuckle ; a lark would go whirring up from the corn-field on the other side, warbling its sweet, grateful song, that sounded like a hymn of thanksgiving for the bright beauty of the day ; and, as he soared out of sight, still warbling, a black-bird or a thrush took up its part in the chorus.

It was as if all nature was joyous and glad, because of the sunshine. Dolly's little heart caught some of the gaiety around her.

"Surely," she could not but say to herself, "surely we are to find him to-day. All is so bright, so beautiful !"

And she hurried after her aunt, whom neither the delicious sounds nor sights of the road they were pursuing had power to stop for one moment.

They were nearing the close of their journey. First came in view the spire of the pretty, unpretentious village church ; this they beheld at some distance, and Dolly pointed it out to her aunt gleefully.

"That must be the place, aunty. Oh ! do you think, do you really think we have found dear Harty this time?"

"I trust, I hope so, my dear," was the reply.

And they hastened on.

Now they emerged, from the hedge-rows and lanes, to the top of a hill, whence they looked down upon the clusters of cottages, and, further on, the farm-houses,

barns, and rick-yards, which formed the rather considerable village they were bound to.

Aunt Charlotte looked out and around with some anxiety. She still did not see the immediate object of her search; the common, or heath, where she had been informed the show was established.

They descended the hill, and passed through the village, which was much larger than they had anticipated. On the opposite side, to that on which the travellers had



entered, there stretched a wide common of some extent. Here were to be seen two caravans; like small houses on wheels. The horses had been taken out from the shafts, and were grazing at some distance.

There were small windows in the sides of these oddly-constructed vehicles and dwellings in one. Smoke came from the tiny chimneys; children played about, and ran up and down the steps by which they ascended to their singular homes.



Some women were spreading linen on the common to dry, and towards them Aunt Charlotte now bent her steps, to make her inquiries. The one to whom she addressed herself replied, civilly,—

“Yes, ma’am, the poor boy is here.”

Oh, how Dolly’s heart leaped to hear her words!

“But I am not the mistress,” the woman went on; “I’ll call her, if you’ll please wait a minute.”

She went up the steps to the nearest caravan, and soon returned, accompanied by a very decent woman, to whom she had evidently given an account of the visitor’s purpose.

This woman came up eagerly to Aunt Charlotte.

“Are you his mother?” she asked.

“No, I am his aunt,” was the reply; “this little girl is his sister.”

“I wish his mother had come,” said the woman. “All his talk has been of his father and mother, poor lad!”

“Did he tell you he had run away from home?” asked Aunt Charlotte, somewhat indignantly.

“Indeed! no,” replied the woman. “We knew nothing, nor that he had any friends, till he got light-headed in the fever—”

“*Fever!*” echoed Aunt Charlotte. “Is he ill?”

“Ill! Bless you, ma’am, he’s been at death’s door.” She looked at Aunt Charlotte fixedly a minute. The tears were in her eyes.

“You are not his mother,” she went on hurriedly, “so I may tell you the worst. He is sinking fast. The doctor said he couldn’t last twenty-four hours!”

She had lowered her voice : but the quick hearing of the little girl caught the meaning of her words.

She uttered a loud cry. "Oh, Harty ! dear Harty ! Is he dying ?" she exclaimed, and clasped her little hands in an agony of grief.

The woman looked at her in surprise. "That is not the name he calls himself," she said.

"Perhaps it is Harold," said Aunt Charlotte faintly ; "his name is Harold Winwood."

"That is more like it," returned the woman ; "but of course it was not likely he gave us his right name, if he was a runaway. He said something about not liking his school, I think." She looked inquiringly at Aunt Charlotte, as she spoke.

That lady shook her head. She could hardly find words to express her wish ; her grief was so terrible. To have found their dear, bright Harty thus, only to lose him ! It was too dreadful !

"Take us to him," she said ; "we have come a long way."

The woman turned, without another word, and they followed her up the steps of the smaller caravan, where, to Dolly's surprise, they found themselves in quite a comfortable little room. Very small, certainly, not much larger than the berth, where Dolly had slept, on board the yacht. But everything was in its place, and thoroughly clean. An old man sat smoking by the tiny fireplace, but he took no notice of them.

The woman went on before, and lifted a curtain which screened off one part of the room. The aunt and niece followed her, with beating hearts.

A ray of sunlight streamed in from the small window, and lighted up a narrow bed, whereon lay the figure of a boy. His face was turned from them, but at the sight of the clustering, dark-brown curls upon the pillow, Dolly uttered an involuntary cry, and would have darted forward, but her aunt restrained her with a warning hand. "Is he asleep?" she said faintly.

"No," said the woman, also in a low voice. "He lies now for hours like that, and takes no notice."

Aunt Charlotte went forward gently, and with faltering lips breathed out the words, "Harty! dear Harty!"

The boy turned on his pillow, and fixed on her his large, dark, mournful eyes.

Then Dolly gave vent to another exclamation, less of pain than of thankfulness; for the pale face was a strange one! The boy was not Harty!

Her aunt had recovered herself in a moment. She knelt down by the bedside of the dying lad. "Go outside," she said to her little niece, "and wait for me on the common."

Dolly went. What a load was lifted from her heart since she went up those steps!

The poor boy was a runaway. He was dying—alone! far from his own friends.

She was sorry—deeply sorry—for his fate. Yet she could not but be thankful it had not been Harty they had so found. Ah! she had daily prayed that her brother might be restored to her, yet now she found herself thanking God, with all her heart, that here they had missed finding him! She wandered to and fro on the common, keeping the caravans in view. The children

had gone off to a distance to play, lest they should disturb the sick boy. It grew dusk; the stars began to twinkle in the blue sky, and the light of the moon faintly stole over the scene.

Dolly still waited. She knew that if her aunt could be useful in any charitable work, she would remain as long as she was needed. Tired, however, of walking, the little girl sat down upon a dry mound, at some distance from the smaller caravan, but not far from the other, whereon she now saw was displayed a large painted picture—the growing dusk prevented her seeing the subject.

All at once she beheld a huge, dark object approaching her, from the direction of the large caravan. It looked like a very big man in a rough great coat, but he reeled so in his walk that Dolly thought he must be very drunk; and, as she had a horror of drunken men, she sprang to her feet, and was turning towards the caravan, where she had left her aunt, when the rude creature in front of her actually placed himself right in her path, and spread out his arms, as if to hinder her further progress.

Dolly was no coward, but she did turn cold all down her back, and her knees shook. Before she had made up her mind what to do, the intruder made a couple of rolling strides towards her, and she found herself face to face with a huge brown bear.

Dolly did not scream; she did not fall down, nor turn to run away. In an instant it flashed upon her that all resistance would be useless. She gave herself up for lost, and wondered momentarily what her poor aunt would do, when she found remaining of her little niece only a piece of blue ribbon, or a rag of her dark dress.

Involuntarily she stretched out her hands to the beast, as if imploring mercy. What was her amazement to see the bear go humbly down upon its haunches, and extend its paw, exactly as though offering to shake hands with her!

The next moment there was a loud bark, a confused sound of voices, and who should dash up to her side but Bannock, while the piping tones of Peter Pranks made themselves heard.

To see the poor brown bear take to its heels, before the widely-opened mouth and formidable teeth of Bannock, was a sight that, at another time, would have made Dolly laugh.

Now she was too much overjoyed by the appearance of these home friends to do aught but wonder.

The keeper of the bear came up, and apologized for any fright she might have had.

"He takes every opportunity of getting his walks abroad," said the man, "but he's as harmless as a babby. The poor little chap has gone," he went on to the pedlar. Pranks and he were old friends.

"Ay, ay," said Peter, in a tone of much regret. "I have been leading these dear good ladies on a false scent, and am heartily sorry for it."

"I am not sorry now, Peter," said Aunt Charlotte, who just then joined the group. "I was able to promise that poor little fellow to take his last message to his mother. I have arranged all with these poor people here," she added; "they seem to have treated him very kindly. He ran away from school, where he was harshly used, and, being a clever little rider, he was made useful in the show."

Then, to her great amazement, she saw Bannock.

"How did he come here?" she asked.

"When I went to Sherway Cottage, ma'am," replied Peter, "the animal seemed fairly out of his wits with joy. He stuck to me, followed me everywhere, and as good as said he meant to go wherever I did. I believe he knew he should light upon some of the family by keeping on my tracks."

"What will you do with him, Peter?" asked the lady.

"Oh! he will be no encumbrance to me," rejoined the pedlar. "His mother travelled with me for many a day while she lived."

"I am afraid he will want to be coming with us," said Aunt Charlotte.

"I will take care he doesn't trouble you, ma'am," replied Pranks.

"We must be getting back to Gratemill, where we have left our portmanteau at the hotel," said Miss Winwood. "Do you think, Peter, you could obtain any conveyance for us from here to the railway station? I feel quite unable to walk farther."

Indeed, the anxiety and fatigue she had undergone were beginning to tell upon the poor lady. She seemed quite faint and weak, and was glad to take Pranks's arm to the place where he told her a chaise could be had to the station, whence they departed to Gratemill.

So far we have accompanied Dolly and her aunt in their unwearied, painful search. We will now leave them for awhile, to follow the cause of all their anxiety, and learn what has really become of Harty, runaway or wanderer as he is.



## CHAPTER XV.

### AFLOAT UPON THE OCEAN.

ON that summer evening when Harty fell asleep in the wood,—as we read some chapters back,—two men were entering it from the opposite side, their object being to make a short cut down to the beach, where a boat was to fetch them off to their vessel.

It was quite dark in the woods, as we have seen, when poor Harty, starting up from his slumbers, ran his head against the tree, with such violence as to stun himself and wound himself badly.

One of the men wore a rough pea-jacket, and wide slouching hat, called a sou'-wester. He had a large, dark beard and shaggy hair, with bushy eyebrows. His voice was very deep and gruff.

The other man, somewhat younger, was dressed in a tight-fitting guernsey, and over that a loose jacket; his hat was like his companion's, only smaller; his hair was light brown; he wore whiskers, but no beard; and he had pleasant, kindly blue eyes.

Both men were tanned almost to the hue of mahogany; but just now nothing of them was to be seen, only two

dark, moving figures, as they passed over the open patches of light cast by the moon, where the trees grew less closely.

"It is all along of your stopping so late," grumbled the elder man, "that we've been benighted in this fashion."

"Ay, mate, one don't count the minutes, when one is taking leave of wife and children, more especially when it may be a couple of years before ye meet again."

"Leave-taking is rubbish!" grumbled the other. "It comes to the same thing, if it is to be good-bye, whether you say it once or twenty times; and here we are in this mortal hole of a place, that you can't make out your right hand from your left. All along of your precious leave-takings!"

"Well, mate, don't be cross and crabbed our last night ashore."

"Bother the shore!" grumbled the other; "I don't care if I never set foot on it again for—Hallo! what's here?"

He stopped short; his companion did likewise.

"What is it?" asked the latter.

The elder man made no answer, but, stooping down, began to grope with his hands.

"Bear a hand here, Larcom," he said; "it's a boy or man—I can't make out which."

A little farther on the trees cleared and left an open space, on which the moon shone brightly. The two sailors lifted the insensible form of poor Harty, and bore him thither. By the clear moonlight they saw him very plainly—the pale face, and the large cut on his forehead, from which the blood still flowed.



"Is he dead?" asked Larcom.

"If he isn't he soon will be," answered his companion, "if he lies there with that cut bleeding at such a rate. Bear a hand here, mate, with my handkerchief."

As he spoke, the rough seaman had torn his handkerchief in strips, and, while his companion supported the insensible boy in his arms, he staunched the blood and bound up the wound quite skilfully.

"Poor little chap!" said Larcom; "I wonder where he comes from, and what has happened to him!"

"It won't do to leave him here," said the elder man; "he'd be as dead as a herring before morning."

"He must have friends," said the other; "they will be looking for him, surely?"

"You and I can't stay to see his friends—can we? I can't find it in my heart to leave the poor little beggar here on his back all night."

"What will you do, Hawkins?"

"Bear a hand, mate; up with him on to my back."

"What do you mean to do?" asked the younger man, as he assisted his messmate to raise the unfortunate boy from the ground.

"Take him down to the boat, certainly. If he's to die, he may as well die aboard; if he's to live, it's a better chance for him, anyway, than lying here, and we'll pretty soon find him a berth. We want a cabin-boy—he'll do!"

"You are sure you're right?" asked the younger man doubtfully, as he assisted his companion to lift the still insensible form of the unfortunate boy.

"Right or wrong, mate," replied Hawkins, "'tis the only thing to do. You have young ones of your own—would

you leave the poor monkey out here on his back, all night, for that ugly cut to stiffen on his head? It 'ud be his death. *We* can't stop to go crying him round the country."

"Of course not!"

"Well, then, a whiff of sea air will set him up, and, if worst comes to worst, a trip aboard our craft can do him no harm."

The other assented, and they resumed their journey, carrying the boy between them; and, as they got clear of the trees, they made quicker progress. Just as they neared the cliff Harty's cap rolled off, and was lost, falling amid the bushes on the path below, where it was afterwards found by the pedlar, all blood-stained, from the cut on the poor lad's forehead. The rocky descent, down the face of the cliff would have been a difficult task for landsmen to achieve, encumbered as they were by their burden; but the two sailors performed it with ease and speed, and soon they stood on the beach below.

"There is the boat, and Bill Geelong snoozing in the stern," said Larcom.



They hailed the boatswain, who shook himself awake.

"I was just a thinking you wasn't coming at all," he grumbled.

"*Thinking!*" retorted Hawkins; "you mean *dreaming*. Bear a hand here!"

With the aid of Larcom, he deposited the insensible form of the boy in the bottom of the boat.

"Give way, men," he said.

The men bent to their oars with a will. The boat sped over the water, like an arrow, leaving far behind the wood and the cliff and beach, all bathed in the soft moonlight.

"What's here?" said the gruff old boatswain, touching the motionless figure with his foot.

"Our new cabin boy," said Hawkins.

"Don't seem very lively at present," muttered Bill Geelong.

"It is a poor little chap we found in the wood up yonder, as we came through," explained Larcom.

"And my tender heart wouldn't let me leave him there you see," put in Hawkins gruffly.

This appeared to be such a capital joke that the men grinned and chuckled silently among themselves. One said, under his breath, to his neighbour, "*His* 'tender heart'—ho, ho!"

Then both shook with suppressed laughter.

Soon they reached the vessel, which hung out her white sails, like a large sea-bird, impatient to spread its wings for flight. Amid the bustle of departure and the setting of the watch, no further attention was paid just then to the fact of the new arrival. Hawkins had attended to the wound in the boy's head with such rude skill as he was

master of, and had him put into a bunk alongside of his own.

"Queer," muttered the sailor to himself, as he took off some portion of Harty's clothes. "He has but one boot. Maybe we dropped the other on the road. 'Tis awkward, though, for I don't believe there's another aboard to fit him."

Harold had come out of the faint caused by the blow and loss of blood, and, without thoroughly recovering consciousness, had fallen asleep.

"He'll be all right when he wakes," said Hawkins to himself. "Wonder what will the skipper say?"

So here, all unknown to himself, Harty had arrived at the height of his ambition. He was in a ship—a real ship—among real sailors, sailing away to foreign countries; far from his home, his friends, and kindred, who were only now beginning to be anxious about him.

The vessel was a small trader, bound on the present voyage to China. Hawkins was first mate and part owner. Being an older man, and of far greater experience than the captain, or skipper, as they called him, he did very much as he pleased; and all on board stood considerably in awe of the rough seaman, who, however, despite his harsh voice and manners, was very far from being bad-hearted, or wanting in feeling.

"You've made a pretty kettle of fish here," said the captain to Hawkins the following day, when he had learned the history of Harty's coming on board.

"What was I to do—leave the little monkey to die? Wish I had now, though!"

"You've brought the boy away from all his belongings,

and it's a chance even if you let them know of his whereabouts this side of a twelvemonth."

"What's done can't be undone, and no amount of talking will alter it," said Hawkins testily.

"And the youngster is roaring below there, like a bull-calf," added the captain.

"Oh! I'll find a way to stop his roaring," growled Hawkins.

For, to tell the truth, poor Harty's courage had quite broken down, when he found out what had befallen him. It was so very different from anything he had pictured to himself. Instead of going to sea, with a grand outfit, and a general flourish of trumpets, to wake up thus, and find himself on board a dirty trading-vessel, with rough sailors around, all strange and harsh and uncivil; with no clothes but those he had on, no money in his pockets, no hat or cap, and but one boot! with no knowledge of his destination, and the remembrance of having left his home in anger! It was enough to have broken down the resolution of an older mind than poor Harty's. No wonder he sat on the edge of the berth, and gave way to bitter tears. He started at the sound of a harsh voice near him.

"What! blubbering still!"

He looked up. There stood the black-browed mate.

"Look here, youngster, if you're so fond of salt water, there's plenty of it yonder; and, whip me, if you shan't have a taste of it pretty quick! What have you got to howl for?"

Harty dried his eyes with the back of his hand, and stood up, looking the speaker in the face, but he said nothing.

"Are ye hungry?"

"No, sir," said the boy.

"Are ye thirsty?"—"No."

"Is it the cut on your head pains you?"

"I shouldn't cry for that," said Harty proudly.

"Then what is it?"

"You've brought me away from home, and they won't know where I am," sobbed the boy. "It will break Dolly's heart."

"And who's Dolly?" asked Hawkins, less roughly.

"She's a girl. She's my sister," replied Harty, with difficulty commanding his voice.

"Well now, look here," was Hawkins's rejoinder.

"We did it all for the best, my mate and I. You was lying on the cold ground, bleeding away from that cut on your scalp; and how were we to know if your home was one mile, or twenty, off? To have left you there would have been murder."

"I wish you had! I wish you had!" exclaimed Harty passionately.

"I wish I had, with all my heart," roared Hawkins.

"You young cub! you might have laid there, and rotted, too, if I'd known—"

"That's enough, Hawkins," said another voice, and the captain entered.

"Let me have a word with the lad now," said the newcomer. Harty looked up. He saw a pleasant-faced, fresh-coloured man, who advanced and took him by the hand.

"Come with me, up on deck," went on the captain.

"What no boot?" we must set that right. Here, Sam."

A boy, somewhat older than Harty, answered the call. The captain directed him to fetch a pair of slippers,

which fitted Harty tolerably. Hawkins had withdrawn to the deck, grumbling. The captain led the way to his own part of the vessel; Harty followed with difficulty. The captain extended his hand to him now and again, speaking cheerfully at intervals.

"You'll get your sea-legs presently, never fear," he said.

When they stood together, where no one could hear their talk, the captain spoke: "See here, my man; this is a bad job; I've heard all about it. I'm sorry it's happened, I can tell you; but it was well meant. You might have died if you had been left there."

"If I could only let them know at home," broke in Harty.

"*That's* impossible," returned the captain decidedly. "We're far out at sea. It may be months before we have a chance even to do that." A sob burst from the boy.

"It's a bad job," pursued the captain, "but it can be made the best, or the worst of; like most things. Sit down and cry over it—that's making the worst; look the thing in the face, and make up your mind to endure it—that's making the best. You can take your choice, and act accordingly."

The captain moved away from the boy, when he had done speaking, as though to give him time to reflect on what he had said. So sore at heart, so lonely and bewildered did the poor lad feel; he gazed around with such wistful eyes at the wide waste of waters. It seemed as though he could have plunged into the sea, with the poor chance of being washed ashore, near his dear, forsaken home, which, alas! he now felt he might never see again. Yet, even then, the sensible advice of the honest captain was sinking deep into his heart. "Make the best of it,"

something said—"make the best of it." Already something like shame was rising in his mind, to think that he, who had always professed himself so eager for a sailor's life, should have let himself be seen "crying like a girl." When the captain again approached him, Harty humbly asked: "Is there anything I can do? Can I be of any use on the ship?"

"Well!" returned the captain cheerily, "you have made up your mind, I see; I am glad of it."

"I should like to do something," said Harty faintly.

"Yes," replied his new friend; "but at present there is not much you can do, I am afraid. You must get your sea-legs on first, you know."

He laughed, and steadied Harty with his hand, as the boy lurched heavily over.

"In a few days you'll get used to this sort of thing. Hi! Sam!"

The boy who had brought the slippers appeared again.

"Take Winwood to my cabin. And, do you hear? Keep civil!"

He frowned heavily at the boy, who took Harty by the shoulder and almost carried him below.

The unhappy boy was now fearfully sick. It was his first experience of sea-sickness, and he believed he was dying.

Hawkins came up to the captain as the boys quitted him.

"I thought you were not going to take that imp another trip with us?" he said.

"I didn't mean to, but he promised to do better; and Sam is a clever hand in a gale."

"And the wickedest young ape ever born," returned the mate.





## CHAPTER XVI.

### SAM, THE CABIN-BOY.

HARTY was now to learn how different were the realities of a sea-life to what his fancy had painted it.

It was some days before he could even stand, without being thrown violently from side to side, by the rolling of the ship ; for they were now far out upon the open sea, not merely coasting a tranquil bay, as Dolly and her aunt had done in the yacht. He was terribly sick, and bruised all over by frequent falls. Added to these miseries, he was laughed at by the sailors ; who, though not actually unkind, had been through it all themselves, when young, and saw very little to complain of, in what was utter hardship to the delicately reared boy.

But all this was nothing, compared to the malignity of the cabin-boy, Sam ; who deserved to the full the character given him by Hawkins, the mate.

He seemed to have fixed upon the new comer as the especial object of every bad turn and spiteful act he could devise. And all was done with such cunning that detection was almost impossible.

True to his good resolution, Harty had determined on facing his sad misfortune, and making the best of it.

To be employed was his great wish, and, as he was of course ignorant of the duties with which Sam, the cabin-boy, was quite conversant, there remained nothing for which he could be made available except to help the cook.

So here was Harty Winwood—the boy who had taken prizes at school, and been foremost in his class—occupied in scraping carrots, and peeling potatoes and onions ; or in cleaning knives and washing greasy dishes.

A terrible punishment, certainly, had followed his sin of playing truant, and keeping back his aunt's letter. He was heavily chastised, for his bad temper and disobedience of that day, and he knew not when it would come to an end.



Often and often—when occupied in these degrading duties, or lying awake in the close, ill-smelling bunk he occupied at night—he would go over in his mind the events of that day ; he would say to himself, “If I had only gone to school ; if I had but been friends with Dolly and aunt when I left, how different all would have been!”

Sometimes the tears came to his eyes, but he never let them fall. He never cried again after that first day; nor spoke of his home, nor his sister, nor aunt, to any one.

"I will bear it all," he said to himself bravely. "I have deserved it, and I'll bear it, if I die!"

So, you see, Harty was already learning something from his troubles. He was learning to be manly and courageous.

The captain took heed of him quietly, though he did not say much; but one day he called Harty to him.

"I'm glad, Winwood," he said, "to see that you are getting reconciled to what can't be helped. It shows your sense; you'll find things work easier. And now I can tell you what I shouldn't, perhaps, if I had seen you stubborn; you may depend on my laying hold on the first chance that turns up for sending you on homeward tracks."

Harty's face beamed. The captain seeing this, made haste to add,—

"It mightn't happen, you know, such a chance, on the voyage; but then again, it might. But you shall have the benefit of it, if it does, never fear!"

Poor Harty! The very hope and possibility of such a chance made his heart leap with joy.

It was very little flattering to his own opinion of himself, was it not? that they should be so ready to part with him; should deem him of so small account.

But Harty did not think of that. He was humble enough now; the boy who at home was wont to expect great consideration; to whom dear little Dolly had been always ready to yield, and who, even from schoolmates, servants, and playfellows, had never failed to exact pretty considerable deference. It was all altered now.

He went back to his duties, in the cook's galley, and occupied himself very busily. Presently, meeting the mate Hawkins, whom Harty had hitherto avoided as much as he could, the boy said,—

"I am very sorry for what I said that first day. I know you did all for the best. You meant to be kind, I know, and very likely I should have died, if you had left me."

"Say no more about it, youngster; perhaps it's all for the best—who knows!" returned Hawkins, who chanced to be in a jocular mood. "Perhaps you'll be commodore yourself yet, afore you die. Hi! you Sam, what are you skulking there about, you lubber! Clear those pannikins abaft."

"It's *his* business," said Sam, rudely indicating Harty with his finger.

"*His* name's Winwood, you cub, and where's yer manners? If you don't make scarce with those pannikins in less than a second, I'll—"

Sam had vanished, muttering audible vengeance, before the mate had finished speaking.

"You be on your guard against that imp," said Hawkins to Harty; "he'll serve you an ill turn if he can. He's as jealous as a poll-parrot, and as cunning as a fox. You beware of him."

Harty often thought of these words in after-times. At present he gave little heed to them.

He had done nothing to give offence to the boy Sam, and what could there be in his present unenviable condition to inspire any one with jealousy?

But who can account for the follies that disturb badly-organized and morbid spirits?

The cabin boy hated Harty, chiefly because he was called by his surname, Winwood. No one had ever called Sam anything but "Sam," from the time he was born. If he had been called by his surname it would have only been a cause of joking, for his name was Butty, which would, you may suppose, have been converted into "Putty." So, on the whole, I think Sam might have been content.

Another reason for his aversion was, that while on weekdays Harty was clad, like himself, in the suit of coarse tarpaulin befitting their rough work, on Sundays Winwood came out a smart youth, transformed by the clothes he had worn the day of his runaway excursion into the wood, which were carefully hoarded for that purpose.

I hope the young people who read this may find it difficult to imagine how any one could be found mean enough to make these trifles cause for hatred and ill-feeling. But it is true. And as poor Harty could not himself imagine it, he was far from believing it possible that Sam held such a feeling towards him.

One day there was a great outcry among the sailors.

The soup served out to them, for their dinners, deposited, at the bottom of each pannikin, a peculiar substance, which, on investigation, proved to be pieces of an old comb, and shreds of oakum.

The cook was indignant at the reproaches naturally levelled at him. Harty had been his only assistant; as it happened, Sam had not been near the galley the whole morning. Of course the blame was now directed at the boy.

In vain he protested. The cook was lifting his voice and hand together, when Hawkins, who had heard of the matter, appeared.

"Stow that, sharp!" he said. "Now, where's Sam? has he had any soup?"

"No."

"Where is he then?"

"Down in his bunk, with toothache."

"I thought so! Did Winwood have soup?"—"Yes, sir."

"Of course. D'ye think the imp that seasoned the soup so beautifully was going to partake of it? Not he."

The cook stared—so did the sailors present. It had not struck them in that light.

"Fetch that cub here," roared Hawkins.

Sam came.

"You young scamp!" exclaimed the mate, as he took him by the collar. "How dared you pepper the soup with that trash?"

"It wasn't—" Sam began. But Hawkins stopped him short.

"Don't dare tell me a lie! We *know* you did it. Now say *when*, and *how*, the muck was put in, or I'll have you up to the bulkhead in the twinkling of a bowsprit."

Sam began to blubber.

"Out with it," roared Hawkins.

"I was sweeping up the top deck," Sam began.

"That 'ill do, you dirty cub," cried the mate. He sent the cabin boy spinning with all his might, and Sam made his exit with such force that he ran full tilt with his head into the stomach of the old boatswain.

Bill Geelong was not slow to return the compliment, with another impetus from his fist; which further assisted the culprit in his flight.

"I reckon that will cure his toothache for a bit," said

Hawkins. "It beats me to think what possessed the captain to take the trickey cur aboard again. There's no being even with him, and he'll play some of ye a worse turn some day, than he has yet—you see if he don't."

The Sunday following the incident of the soup, service was being performed as usual on board.

Harty had knelt during the prayers, and was about to rise, when he found himself glued to the planks. He made an effort, drew up his knees, and "crack!" Huge gaps yawned in his much-prized blue cloth trousers, through which peeped the bare knees of their distressed owner.

Sam was intent upon his prayer-book, muttering the responses. He did not appear even to be aware of the terrible disaster which had drawn the attention of more than one near Harty. These gave a smothered grin, and shook their fists ominously in the direction of the seemingly unconscious cabin boy.

But who was to say it was Sam, who had dropped that unlucky dab of pitch, just where the enviable blue cloth garments had been so decorously bent to pray?

Nothing could be proved; and Harty, with a sick feeling of disgust, yet a resolve to make no complaint, went to his berth, after service, to try whether he might manage in some sort to repair the damage.

But it was beyond his skill. As he stood mournfully looking at the spoiled garments, and thinking how impossible it was they could now be replaced, a faint chuckle caught his ear, and, looking up, he saw Sam's mean, ugly face looking in upon him.

"You want Dolly dear, don't you? with her needle and thread!" sneered the young reprobate.

At the name of his sister, thus uttered by a miscreant, Harty's blood boiled.

He pounced upon Sam, and, though the latter was the tallest and heaviest, he thumped him so heartily that the other roared for mercy. In his fury, Harty had not measured his vengeance, and when, alarmed by the noise, the captain came out of his cabin, close by, he beheld the spectacle of one boy bleeding from the nose and mouth, while another, in a pair of ragged trousers, was punching the wounded victim unmercifully.

In a moment they were parted.

The captain's wrath was turned upon Harty.

"What do you mean, sir? Fighting! and on the Sunday. Do you know, I have a mind to give you a taste of a rope's end!"

Sam grinned his satisfaction behind the captain's back.

"What was it about?" the skipper asked.

Harty made no answer.

"He kneeled on something, sir, and tore his trousers, and then he pitched into me," whined Sam.

"It wasn't for *that*!" said Harty indignantly.

"If you have any complaint, sir, I am here," said the captain. "Don't let me hear of your taking the law into your own hands."

Sam was sneaking off.

"As for you," added the captain, "turning swiftly upon him, "your grog is stopped for a week!"

Master Sam Butty was not in such full triumph, after all. He had learned the weight of Harty's fist, too, and kept at a respectful distance. But not the less did he harass and annoy the unhappy boy.



He had picked up that name—probably from poor Harty's muttering in his sleep—and he would use it on every occasion to irritate him.

Often, when he had stung young Winwood into retaliation, he would leap lightly from the deck, hand-over-hand, up the yards, to the topmast, among the shrouds; there he would hang fearless, mocking at them below. Suddenly he would feign to drop, or hang by one hand or foot, and play such monkey tricks that even the most inveterate against him would forget their grievance, in admiring his boldness and skill.

"He's the most fearless young varmint that ever was hatched," said old Bill Geelong.

"He's no call to be afraid on the sea," said another. "Them that are born to be hanged will never be drowned, they say."

Hitherto they had had fine weather on the voyage, and, amid all his griefs, Harold Winwood had found cause to admire the beauties of the ocean, and its many rare and wonderful changes, by dawn of day, sunset, or solemn night.

But now there came a change. Day after day of heavy rains, and adverse winds followed. The vessel was driven considerably from her track. Some of the men were laid up. Double duty devolved upon those who were able to work.

In consequence there was much discomfort. Provisions were found to be spoiled in the hold: this put the hands on small rations of some kinds of victuals.

Among those who had now to make themselves extra useful was Harty. Hitherto his duties had been menial and unpleasant enough, but not in any way trying to his strength or capacity. But now it became, not a question

of what he *could* do, but what he *must*. More of the sailors fell ill. Sam took the place of one of these, and all his duties fell to Harty.

Then—hard worked; with often only half enough sleep; food of the coarsest, which at times he found it impossible to eat; with cut and bleeding hands, and sores on various portions of his body, from the contact of rough clothes and salt water—then Harold Winwood realized to the full how great a punishment may ensue on the smallest error; how one easy step from the straight, true path may lead to a terrible maze of difficulty and suffering. And even now the worst had not been reached.

The berth which Harty occupied was shared with the mate Hawkins. There stood in one corner a small locker, with a top that, being let down, served as a sort of table or desk.

Harty had often, while dozing on his bed, seen the mate unlock this flap and sit writing or reading; and more than once had heard the chink of money as Hawkins counted it, or put away, or took out from his store.

One night, it being the mate's turn on deck, Harty was startled by hearing the well-known sound of the locker, which creaked when opened.

He started up. In the dim light he saw a smaller figure than the mate's busy at the open locker.

For the moment he was too much amazed to speak.

The next he had whispered more than spoken the word "Sam!"

The cabin-boy, for it was he, turned sharp round, and, pale as death, made-believe to laugh off the matter as a joke.

"Old Hawkins left his key in his locker, and I just took a peep in. He's a miser, you know."

"I know you'd better not meddle with lockers that arn't your own," said Harty.

"Where's the harm of looking in, when it's open?" retorted Sam. "I don't want to meddle with his old hoards. What's the good of money here?"

"I suppose money will be of use when we go ashore, won't it?" said Harty coldly.

"Ah! *when* we do, Master Wisehead. When will that be? Perhaps you can tell; you know so many things. I suppose you'll be for telling Old Hawky I came after his coins now!"

"I am no tell-tale, as you know," rejoined Harty proudly.

Sam soon after left the berth.

Harty noticed that no key was left in the lock.

The cabin-boy must have opened it.

This made him feel very uneasy. He could not bring such a charge against a shipmate. Yet if Sam were dishonest, and money were missing, Harty might himself be suspected.

Sam never forgave the boy who had found him out. Thenceforward he went in mortal dread of being betrayed by him.

He was for ever planning some deep scheme for getting rid of one who, he felt, had him in his power. And ere long circumstances gave him the opportunity he was not slow to avail himself of for the ruin of the unfortunate Harty.



## CHAPTER XVII.

### IN SAVAGE HANDS.

It was a joyful sight for the whole ship's company when the gloomy skies cleared, the rain ceased. The contrary winds lulled, and sank gradually, giving place to a soft, balmy air, breathing sweet odours from the groups of islands they were now nearing, and bearing health and hopefulness to the sick and weary.

The reviving rays of the sun brought the poor invalids out on deck, the soaked garments and bed-coverings were spread to dry. The ship sped tranquilly on her course, while the white sails seemed to laugh with gladness, as they puffed out gaily, under the influence of the favouring breath of heaven.

Soon they came in view of the group of green islands, which seemed to rise like fairy land from the bosom of the sea. Some of these were wholly uninhabited, yet were known to contain precious stores of fruits and roots most valuable to ships' crews, to whom fresh vegetables were unattainable; also fresh water, of which they wanted a supply.

But, again, others of the islands were known to be the resort of tribes of savages. Not all hostile, certainly, if not

intruded upon; yet at times visited by those of a fierce and murderous disposition. It was, therefore, with great caution that seamen accustomed themselves to visit the islands; glad as they always were to avail themselves of the opportunity of setting their feet upon the green earth, and obtaining those needful supplies I have alluded to. The very anticipation seemed to make sound men of such as had been ailing for weeks past.

Two boats were lowered, and speedily manned. The invalids were divided. Sam and Harty were in one boat, with Larcom and Bill Geelong. Hawkins was in the other. Baskets and water-jars in plenty were provided, with strong injunctions, from the elder men to the rest, not to stray about, but to keep well together.

"I have landed here a score of times," said Hawkins, "and have never yet been molested, or seen aught worse than myself; still ye never know."

Bill Geelong shook his head.

"It's the pitcher to the well," he said sagely. "You may carry it safely ninety-nine times, and the hundredth it's smashed! You boys, keep the boat well in sight, and, whatever you do, don't go in among the trees up-shore."

Once on the soft green that lined the banks, almost to the water's edge, one would have said the frenzy of madness had seized on the poor pale-faced sick men, who had languished so long in their close, pent-up bunks.

They cast themselves on the ground, they buried their faces in the fresh green, they tore it up, and ate it in handfuls. It was not grass, but a species of small cress or clover, soft and delicate, though tasteless; but it seemed to put fresh life into the wretched men, as they

grasped and chewed and devoured it, and bathed their faces in the moisture, and danced on their knees among it.

Poor souls ! It was for them a providential boon !

Meantime, the boys had accompanied the party who sought the spring where they filled the water-jars.

Sam had been on the island before, and was wonderfully officious in pointing out to Harty all the objects of interest.

"The finest cocoa-nuts grow at the other spring," he said ; "higher up a bit—come on !"

But Harty remembered the injunction of the skipper to "keep well together."

It was like a scene of enchantment to the boy, who had never beheld anything like it, except in those picture-books at home, which had always set him longing for a life of adventure.

Here was the golden-coloured sandy beach, and there the tall, delicate palm-trees, with their feathery crown of leaves, and bunches of royal fruit. There grew massive clusters of giant flowers, brilliant in hue ; and, from the wood that stretched further in shore came, now and again, a singular medley of sounds—now a chatter, now a scream, now a soft whistling, whether of bird or beast, Harty could not have guessed.

And there the sea ; which for weeks past he had looked upon running mountains high, and threatening to overwhelm the ship ; now crept softly up, kissing the shore, which sloped to meet it, and breaking, in noiseless wavelets, on the fruitful soil.

Harty felt as though he were in a dream—so wild, so strange, and beautiful it all was.

"You are taking it easy," he suddenly heard Sam's

voice; and, looking up, saw the cabin-boy with a basket of cocoa-nuts, and a full water-jar beside him. Larcom had not given Harty a water-jar, in consideration of his being a novice, but had told him to look about him and use his legs a bit.

Sam held out half a cocoa nut filled with the milk of the fruit, which the other accepted, and drank heartily. It was delicious.

"What is that odd noise out among the trees yonder?" asked Harty.

"Oh! that's a jackey-bird," replied Sam. "If you come closer to the wood, you can see him as plain as possible. Such a splendid fellow, and as tame as can be."

"We shall lose sight of the boat," objected Harty.

"Not a bit of it," retorted Sam. "Why the ground rises. You can see the boat better up there than you can here. Think I don't know? I tell you I've been all over this island." Which was a falsehood on the part of Sam; but that did not trouble his conscience, unhappily. "I'll just leave the jar and the cocoa-nuts here, and we'll be at the trees in a trice. I know exactly where the jackey-bird sits, and can point him out to ye in a moment. Come on!"

Harty looked round. Some of the invalid sailors were walking to and fro. The boat looked quite near. He thought there could be no harm, so long as he kept that in sight.

True enough, they were soon among the trees, but the bird did not appear. They heard the soft, whistling cry, seeming to get further off, and Sam kept saying, "Come on, come on!" till they were within the belt of palms;

and the tall shrubs began to press round them, and Harty, looking back, found he had lost sight of the bay with the boats.

"I won't go any further," he said decidedly. "I shall go back.

"Oh! very well," cried Sam, who had been examining the ground near his feet very attentively for some minutes. "Just look here, up through those trees. Do you see anything?"

Harty stepped forward. In a moment the ground seemed to sink under his feet, and he was plunged into a deep hole, leaves, sticks, and earth falling pell-mell all around and over him.

For a moment the suddenness of the fall deprived him of the power to call out.

Then he raised his voice, and cried "Sam!" lustily.

There was no answer.

"Surely," thought the boy, "Sam could not have fallen into a similar pit, and be killed or hurt badly."

He listened. Not a sound could he hear.

Again he called, but with no better result.

The hole was not a very deep one, but the sides were formed of soft earth, which gave way at every touch. It was impossible to climb them. Harty looked up. He could see the deep blue sky, and the feathery tops of the palms. All still and tranquil. But not a sound or sight that could suggest aid of any sort.

What could have become of his companion? Perhaps he had been frightened at his (Harty's) sudden disappearance, and had gone to fetch some of the sailors. So he waited patiently, hoping soon to hear voices, but none came.



Then he began to feel afraid that he was to be left there to die alone. Suppose it had been a trick of that wicked Sam.

Still the captain and Hawkins, and the rest of them, would surely not allow the ship to sail without making search for him. The boy's heart sank within him.

Meanwhile Sam had hurried off as fast as his feet would carry him, as soon as he saw poor Harty tumble headlong into the pit.

He snatched up his water-jar, and basket of cocoa-nuts, and ran down to the beach, where the last boat was just making ready to put off.

"Where's Winwood?" asked Larcom.

"Oh, he is in the other boat," replied Sam, so carelessly, that Larcom, though surprised, never thought of doubting him.

But when they got on board, as it happened, the mate at once asked for Harty.

"He came in your boat," was the reply.

"He did nothing of the kind," retorted Hawkins.

Then turning quick upon Sam, the latter asked, fiercely,—

"What have you done with him?"

"I haven't seen him," Sam protested solemnly.

"Lower that boat again," said Hawkins sternly. Then he ordered Sam into the boat again, and with the rowers he took his seat in it, and off for the island they pulled again.

"If I find foul play here, you cur," said the mate, "you'd better never have been born."

Sam shivered. He dreaded now he should be discovered in the trick he had played. Yet he could depend,

he knew, on the noble boy not betraying him, even if he were found. Hawkins made Sam keep close beside him as he commenced making his search.

The two men who had rowed the boat lay on their oars in the bay. It was getting towards dusk, and the sailors would not choose to remain on the island after dark if they could help it, for they knew not for certain what inhabitants it might contain.

So every few paces they walked Hawkins put his hands each side his mouth, and gave a lusty cheer.

"Winwood, ahoy!"

As they neared the belt of trees a faint sound answered like an echo.

He hurried towards the sound, and repeated his halloo, which was again answered with a faint cheer.

A few more hasty paces, another halloo, and lo! they were at the mouth of the pit.

Harty, looking up, beheld, to his great joy, the rough-bearded face of the mate; while Hawkins, seeing the boy's innocent face beaming up at him, could fairly have cried for joy.

In a very brief space of time the rope, which Sam was despatched for to the boat, was lowered, and Harty slipped the noose under his arms, and so was drawn up.

He was not much the worse, beyond dust and dirt, for he had fallen on the soft twigs and refuse with which the pit was half filled.

"How came you to pitch into that sweet spot?" asked Hawkins, who was dusting the boy's jacket with the end of the rope, not over gently.

"It was my own fault," replied Harty gently, "I came

gaping after a bird I heard among the trees, and forgot to look to my feet. It will be a warning to me."



"I hope it will," returned Hawkins gravely.

Neither of them looked at Sam. He could not tell how far he was suspected of having a hand in the accident.

They had cleared the belt of trees, and the boat was in sight, when, all at once, a strange, low, deadened humming arose, like the gathering of a swarm of bees.

Before Harty could open his mouth, to ask the meaning of it, the mate had quickened his steps, and Sam rushed ahead.

"Be quick!" cried Hawkins, as

he laid his hand on Harty's shoulder. "It is the savages. They are near us. Don't look round—don't run; but

hurry to the boat! to the boat! once there, we are safe."

A gun was fired from the ship. It was to warn them of the danger which was near.

Harty and his companion pressed on.

In another moment they would reach the boat.

Suddenly, with a wild whoop, a band of savages dashed between them and the shore, cutting off their retreat. Sam was already seated in the boat.

The furious, painted, half-naked creatures danced and gesticulated wildly.

One seized Harty by the hair, and attempted to drag him from his companion: but the mate drew his hanger, and, with one blow, cut the savage's hand off at the wrist. Then, clasping Harty in his arms, and, cutting right and left, he dashed through the circle of his howling assailants, and, with one bound, seated himself in the boat. "Give way, men!" he cried.

Away flew the boat, like a bird upon the wing.

The savages, with a yell of rage, dashed into the sea in pursuit.

A storm of arrows darkened the air, and fell thick about the boat. One struck Sam full between the eyes.

One horrible scream issued from the lips of the wretched boy, as he sprang from his seat and dropped into the sea, which was dyed crimson as he sank.

Gun after gun was fired from the ship, and now a second boat appeared, coming to the aid of their comrades.

But the savages, undaunted, still followed in pursuit.

And now the boat was perceived to be filling. A spear from one of the natives had laid open a gash

in her side. Still holding the boy, Hawkins, who was a fine swimmer, sprang into the sea; but, alas! a blow from a tomahawk laid open his head. He sank; his arm detached itself from the boy, who was eagerly seized upon by a gaunt savage swimming near.

At this moment the second boat came up. A couple of guns, loaded with small shot, were discharged into the midst of the savages, who quickly turned tail, and, amid much howling lamentation, made the best of their way to land, bearing with them their young prisoner of war. The ship sailed that night upon her course, after recovering the wounded mate, and the dead body of a sailor. The men believed they had seen Harold Winwood go down, and little thought they were leaving him to a fate worse than death, a captive in the hands of a savage, and, maybe, cruel tribe.





## CHAPTER XVIII.

### RESCUED FROM DEATH.

MORE dead than alive Harty regained the shore, still in the grasp of his terrible captor. The latter appeared to hold some authority over his companions, for, when all were gathered together on the beach again, after a somewhat noisy council had been held, the others appeared to yield to the arguments put forth by him, and all set out at a brisk pace; Harty having received no further attention than a scowl from his own particular savage, who still kept a firm hold upon the boy's shoulder, and with whom no one appeared to dispute any right of possession.

Many and terrible were the pictures which poor Harty's imagination conjured up before him during that hurried, forced march.

He had read of cannibal savages, who roasted and ate their prisoners; of dreadful tortures by fire, and by shooting with poisoned arrows. He gave himself up for lost any way; for he had noticed the menacing gestures of some of the savages, when they pointed to the dead bodies of two of their number who had perished, and he had no doubt that he should be sacrificed in revenge for their loss.

It was dusk when they reached a small settlement or camp of the tribe. This was formed by a number of huts manufactured from the bark of trees, and of size sufficient to admit of some amount of comfort within. In some there was a division made, by hanging up a skin of some slain animal; others were ornamented with shells and feathers. The whole were arranged round three sides of a square, surrounded by a belt of feathery palms; a clear water-brook ran close by, and the grass grew so thick and luxuriant, there could have been found no carpet more soft and dainty to the foot in the whole civilized world.

Harty did not notice all these things at first, you may be sure. His whole thoughts were taken up by terrible anticipations of what was to be his own fate. He did not even know that he was wet to the skin, and that, so long it was since he had eaten, hunger must have made him faint, could he have given his mind to anything but the peril that threatened him. Some women came forth from the camp to meet the new-comers. Then the story was told, and evidently the death of the two savages being related caused consternation, for yells of grief came from some of the women, and looks of rage were cast upon Harty. More than once a rush was made towards him by one more excited than the rest. But the savage who had captured him interposed gravely, and order was for the time restored.

Some of the party had remained behind to bring along the bodies of the slain natives; and by the signs which accompanied their speech, Harty made out that all decision as to his own fate was deferred till their arrival.

By a sign he was ordered to follow his captor to a

larger hut than the others, where, in a corner, he was bade to lie down, and a piece of rush-woven matting was thrown to him. Fires began to blaze up as the darkness came on; one large one, in the centre of the square, was gathered round by all the men; the women grouped themselves at a distance. Presently was heard a faint, low humming, like that which had first given notice of the neighbourhood of the savages to the sailors. It grew nearer and nearer, till the new-comers came straight into the camp, bearing the bodies of their dead friends, and playing a mournful sort of music on a hollow kind of drum. The dead men were laid down near the fire in the midst, covered with green boughs; and such a terrible howling and wailing arose as made the blood of the English boy run cold. When this had subsided a little, an old savage arose, went to the group of women who sat apart, and led forward two by the hands, whom he brought to the side of the dead. Then the chief who had captured Harty came to the tent where he lay, and by a sign bade the lad follow him also to where the women stood.

Harty saw that one of these was a wild-eyed, fierce-looking creature, who gazed down at the face of her dead husband, and tossed her long black hair, and howled, what were evidently vengeful threats against his slayers.

The other was a sad-faced, gentle-looking woman, whose soft dark eyes rained incessant tears over the dead man at her feet; but she made no outcry, nor lifted up her voice. She held a little dark-skinned baby in her arms, and now and again she pressed it to her, and wailed pitifully some tender names, as if she were telling the child that its father was dead, and now they were alone.



The chief said a few words as he brought Harty forward. Then the old man took the boy's hand and made a short harangue. Both the women turned their eyes upon him at once. The mother only looked sad and grief-stricken, as though gently reproaching him for the death of her warrior; but the fierce widow crooked her fingers, and made as if she would have assailed him bodily, while she poured out a torrent of violent abuse, which it was probably well for Harty he could not understand. But the gleaming of her vengeful eyes made him shudder. The old man held up his hand, as if to stay her wrath. Then he went on in his deep guttural, and it was evident that, by an old-established law or usage, this prisoner of war was to be made over to the relatives of the slain men, to be dealt with as they saw fit.

Poor Harty made out as much from the cruel gleam that lighted up the eyes of the savage mourner.

She turned to the woman beside her, and, evidently, she dwelt with fierce satisfaction upon the tortures that should be dealt upon this white captive, whose countrymen had put to death their husbands and made them widows.

The other made no motion of dissent, she only held her baby closer to her breast, bowed her head, and turned away from the black-haired fury, who seemed to hunger and thirst for revenge. It was clear that on the morrow the burial of the slain men was to take place, and the sacrifice of the unhappy captive was to form a part of the ceremony. Harty was led away to the place he had before occupied, which was separated only by a thin curtain of some light material from another hut occupied by several women of the tribe. Soon silence fell upon the camp. The



"HARTY WAS LED AWAY."



great fire burned down to a deep dull glow. The watchers sat near, and snored. An insect or a bird stirred in the forest behind them. The stars burned brightly in the tropical sky. The night grew more still. Even the mourners ceased to wail. All slept but the unhappy English boy. The morning would bring his death. Of that he felt sure. Nothing but his death could satisfy that cruel people. A life for a life was their belief! He said his simple prayer. He prayed his death might be a quick one, that he might be spared torture.

Then he recalled all the happy, blessed, peaceful life of his home, and how little he had prized it, and how he had hankered after adventure. He had found adventure enough; and this was how it had ended.

If only they could know at home! Yet, if they could, what suffering for his dear, gentle little sister Dolly, to know he had perished miserably by the hands of savages!

He prayed they might never know, but think him drowned, or still keep hoping that some day he would return. Ah! till now he, too, had hoped; but now it was all over. "Never again!" Poor boy! The tears came to his eyes, as he said it. "Never again, dear home!"

He had not, it is true, wilfully quitted his home, but we have seen how that one false step led to all that followed.

With a humble and contrite heart he owned it, and prayed to be forgiven; though well he knew, poor Harty, that a dreadful punishment awaited him with the coming day. By-and-by it began to grow light. First the stars ceased to twinkle, and grew pale, till they faded out altogether, before the pink flush which crept softly up to tell that the sun was coming, whose golden rays soon

warmed the tree-tops, and made the birds stir in their nests. Next a soft whistling and chattering began amid the boughs. All sorts of feathered creatures were awaking and beginning to stir to welcome the new day.

Harty was listening with painful attention for the first sound which should give notice of his captors being aroused, when he heard a gentle, babbling noise close to his head as he lay. He looked up. The little child he had seen in the woman's arms last night had crawled from the adjoining hut, and was playing with the ray of sunshine that made its way between the leaves, and sported over the grass where the child sat.

Harty lay looking at the little creature, so happy in its unconsciousness of the loss of its father, and its mother's grief. All at once the child clapped its dusky little hands, and, with a low cry of delight, fixed its eyes upon some object near. Harty leaned forward. He beheld a small green snake making its way towards the child, and within a few feet of where it sat. He sprang to his feet; the snake reared its head and fixed its glittering eye upon the baby, who stretched forth its little hand. The reptile darted out its forked tongue to strike. At the same moment Harty snatched up the child, and held it aloft in his arms, while he set his foot upon the head of the snake and crushed it to atoms. The cry of the child awoke the sleepers. The mother flew forward; seeing her child in the hands of her enemy, her first thought was he had attempted to injure it. But he placed it in her arms; he pointed to the dead snake at her feet, and the tale was told. In a burst of gratitude she fell upon her knees; she kissed his hands, and laid her baby at his feet. The savages

gathered round, and with tears and glad gesticulations the mother told the tale, and pointed to the preserver of her child. She took Harty by the hand; she led him to her hut, and placed before him cakes and fruits. She spread a many-coloured rug, and signed that he should sit down and eat, planting herself as a guard before the entrance. But soon came a noisy detachment, headed by the other woman, widow also of a savage who had been slain. They demanded that the white captive should be given up to vengeance. This the mother refused, with angry cries and loud protestations. She fenced him round with



her arms; she threatened with her wrath any who should attempt to touch her benefactor. As loudly, and with redoubled fury, the other claimed the victim. Now came the chief upon the scene. To him the mother of the babe appealed. She laid her child at his feet. She called upon him to protect her—the mother of the only infant of the tribe, whose life the white captive had saved. She pointed to the crushed snake; she depicted Harty's courageous rescue. She claimed his life, as a return for the life he had saved. She was forcible, urgent, pathetic. She knelt to the chief, and as she clasped his hands her child smiled up in the dusky warrior's face. He yielded—he bade her

take the white-faced captive to her own tent. Rejoicing, she obeyed. Harty's life was saved once more!

The vengeful fury, who saw herself thus baffled, gave vent to her rage in loud cries and shrieks of impotent wrath. She was carried away struggling, kicking, and fighting, to resume in solitude, let us hope, a spirit more befitting the funereal rites of her deceased savage lord.

As for the poor grateful mother, her joy knew no bounds. She carried off her young benefactor to her own hut, or wigwam, again, where he found appetite now to eat some of the singular food she set before him.

She tended on him; brought fresh water, and bathed his feet and hands, which were a good deal torn with the rough haste made in the journey of the day before.

His clothes were wetted through, and ragged. Before evening the grateful savage had woven a dress, like her own, of the softest reeds and palm-leaves, light as muslin, yet warm as thinnest flannel; more pleasant to wear, as Harty found, than his own coarse, dirty canvas suit had been. When he lay down to sleep at night, the eyes of the poor gentle native were watching him; when he awoke she was already afoot, preparing a meal for him. No mother of civilized life could have been more watchful and tender of his comfort than was this grateful islander. The child, too, as though conscious what Harty had done, clung to him, and became a most loving playmate. A hundred small devices Harty found to entertain the little fellow; and, as in their case, the want of language was no drawback, they got on famously. Soon the boy would not leave Harty's side. They slept together, and together *rambled* in the forest or basked in the sunshine, on the soft

grass of the settlement. Yokulmah—this was the name of the mother—taught the white boy to weave the bright mats and baskets, such as the tribe excel in making. He found they led a very simple, quiet life. They were not the wild, aggressive race that are often found on some shores. Their attack upon the sailors of the trading-vessel had been the result of a cruel onslaught made, not long before, by the crew of a Spanish vessel, and the Englishmen had been taken by the natives for their old enemy.

By the rules of their nation, Yokulmah, having lost her husband in warfare, was entitled to support from the rest; therefore a share of everything taken in the chase was always brought to her. There were fruits in the forest, and fish often from the beach. So they lived in plenty, and had the free air and the brilliant sunshine for their pleasures. A smaller hut had been made, by the side of his friend's, for Harty. Here his dusky playmate was most frequently to be found. At times Harty would carry the little fellow on his back, and they would all ramble away down to the sea-beach, where the boy would vainly strain his eyes in the hope of catching sight of some vessel which might chance, as his had done, to send a boat to the island. It was his only hope of escape!

After awhile the savage woman seemed to read his thoughts. She looked at him earnestly, and by signs made him understand that he must not leave them. The baby boy had grown so fond of him, Harty feared that she would prevent his leaving the island, even did a chance occur. Yet it was dreadful to think of being doomed to pass all the remainder of his life with savages, let them be kind as they might.





## CHAPTER XIX.

### DELIVERANCE.

As the days passed on, and no boat touched at the island, no ship appeared in sight, Harty lost hope. He began to think he was indeed doomed to end his days on the island. He remembered to have read of boys who had been left, as he was, and who had grown up to be men, and had forgotten their own language, and become almost like the savages with whom they had associated. Thoughts like these, recollections of his dear, lost home, would sometimes quite overwhelm the boy; and he would cast himself on the ground in his hut, when no one was by, and give way to grief. When Yokulmah found him thus, she would kneel beside him, and smooth his hair with her hands, and stroke his cheeks, making a plaintive, soothing sound, as she used to her baby. The little fellow, too, would lie down beside his white friend, and put his small, brown arms about his neck; and by a hundred tender endearments say as plain as words could have done, "Don't fret about other friends, you have us to love you!"

It was very touching to see the affection borne by these poor savages to the English boy. And with all his natural regrets, Harty could not be always grieving. There

were times when the influence of the glorious sunshine, and the balmy sea breeze, and the merry chatter of the natives (even though he knew not what they said), had such an effect on the boy, that he almost forgot his forlorn state, and would enter into the enjoyment of the things that surrounded him. He found out numberless things to amuse his little playfellow, and the poor mother too, who was little better than a child.

Some of the tribe had brought some bright, many-coloured feathers, of birds they had killed; these Harty stuck in a morsel of cork he found near the spring, and so constructed a shuttlecock. At first his shoe served him for a battledore; and the boy-savage laughed, and clapped his hand, and jumped for very joy, when he saw how Harty sent the feathered cork flying, and kept it up bounding, rebounding, twisting, and flashing in the sun.

Soon the bigger natives gathered round, to wonder and applaud; and ere long, a genuine battledore had been manufactured, from a piece of skin stretched across a sort of ladle, which was composed of half a small cocoa-nut shell, fixed firmly to a handle of peeled wood, hard and firm, and round as a polished cane. This sent the shuttlecock flying, with a bang and a musical twang; which was the signal for roars of laughter, in which even the grave voice of the chief was heard to join; though that of the baby-boy and his mother were loudest.

Surely it was a curious sight! this fair English boy, in his strange dress of palm leaves, making fun for a wild tribe of savages; far away from his own kith and kin, far from all the delights of civilization; around him the rude huts of native build, the grand trees of the forest, with the

many-coloured birds and unknown creatures straying in their depths ; yet he was not wholly unhappy, since he was making the happiness of those who had been good to him.

Yokulmah, watching intently while Harty ate his meals, had soon seen that many things which formed the diet of the tribe were not pleasant to him ; and, with the intelligence of her kind, she set herself to prepare something more suited to his taste. Soon she treated him to a stewed bird, prepared with some savoury roots and milk of cocoa-nuts, which indeed was not unlike a boiled fowl ; and as she saw Harty eat with enjoyment, she clapped her hands, and said, in her gentle tones, some words which the boy soon learned and understood to mean, " So glad, very happy."

The wonderful sense of quick imitation these people possessed, and the skill they displayed in making anything from a copy, or even an idea once got hold of, caused Harty a great deal of surprise. He often thought to himself that if people in civilized countries could only know more about these so-called savages, they would speak of them with more respect ; and, in some things, might even be glad to learn of them. Among themselves, they were gentle, kind, and helpful to the sick or crippled. It seemed to be only when aroused by a sense of oppression and injustice that they showed a spirit of revenge, for which too often great cause had been given.

Wandering in the wood one day with his constant little companion (the little fellow had begun to walk and run), Harty became aware of a curious, melancholy chattering near at hand, yet he could see nothing. All at once he spied, close at his feet, one of those very pits into which he had

fallen, on the memorable day of his coming to the island. He looked in, and there beheld a young monkey, who had evidently come to grief, in the same way that he himself had done, and now sat bewailing itself, and nursing its foot, which appeared to be hurt. Harty hailed one of the tribe, who was not far distant, and the monkey was soon released from its captivity. It was at first wild enough; spit, bit, and chattered spitefully at all who approached. But it was tied at the entrance of one of the huts, and kept for a day and a night without food. It was soon tamed by hunger, and ate from their hands.

Then it allowed them to look at its foot; the women bound it up in healing leaves, and when the creature was cured it seemed to have no inclination to escape. It was made over to Yokulmah, and her boy, for a plaything; but it grew so fast that it was soon an animal of importance, and its alternate merry freaks and fits of gloom afforded great amusement. Poor Harty sometimes fancied there was a resemblance to himself, when the poor monkey, in one of its melancholy moods, would sit and nurse its foot, and blink its eyes, taking no notice of anything that was said to it. Just as if it too were musing on happier days, and calling to mind a home and friends it was never to see again. Who knows? it may have been so!

And now an adventure befell Harty which he had never dreamed of, and which led up to much that the future was to bring forth. It was the season when the savages went away to their hunting.

None but the young men and most vigorous joined this band, which probably had many difficulties to encounter, and much fatigue on their distant journeys. They were

to be absent a month, or a whole moon, as Yokulmah made Harty understand by pointing to the moon, and making the signs which, to some extent, he had learned to interpret.

Their absence would have made little or no difference to Harty, but he learned with dismay, after their departure, that the small remainder of the tribe were to break up their present camp, and retire much higher up into the forest, where there would be less danger of intrusion from strangers. All that were left being now the women, the old men, and some few sick and crippled young ones, this precaution seemed wise. But, alas! to the poor captive it meant a loss of every chance for escape. To be near the sea-coast, in the neighbourhood of the springs, where, if a boat put in for water, he might be seen, this was his only hope, and now it was to be taken from him!

In his despair that night he seemed to lose all heart. True he prayed, as he had always done, that escape might be near, might come quickly. But his hope was faint indeed. He believed now that his punishment was to last for his life, that banishment to this island was to be his doom. So he lay down to sleep, little thinking how near was the means of escape—how he would himself reject it when the time came. The sun was high in the heavens when he awoke, and he sprang up, blaming himself as he did so; for it was his self-imposed task to fetch water from the spring; and he knew the faithful Yokulmah would take the duty on herself rather than arouse him. He saw her hut was empty. She had gone to the spring then, and taken the boy with her. Always now thinking for others, Harty set off to go towards the spring, and to relieve the gentle woman of her load. He hurried along

in the beautiful brightness of the morning, The blue sky glowed through the fluttering leaves of the forest. The dazzling-plumaged birds flitted from bough to bough. The soft turf yielded springily beneath his feet.

No one seeing Harty now would have known him for the same boy who had been at the cricket-match, in the home field, a few months back. The out-of-door life, the pure air, and strong food had given vigour to his form and freshness to his blood. He was tall, muscular, walked erect, and his tanned face glowed with health and spirit. As he went along, a soft chuckle met his ear, and Nicko, the monkey, swung himself down, from the branch



of a tree, on to the lad's shoulder. Harty laughed, and nipped the end of Nicko's tail with his thumb and finger. The monkey retorted by making believe to bite his master's ear, but it was only in jest; and he crouched down to his neck in a sort of affectionate caress, and chattered his satisfaction. Not alone in outward appearance had the English boy improved. His heart must have been a good and unselfish one now, which won the affection of

untaught men and dumb animals alike. The murmuring, dissatisfied Harty, of Sherway Cottage, had passed away, and a nobler, better spirit had taken his place. On he went, feeling almost light-hearted under the hopeful influences of the morning. He neared the spring. The soft trickling of the water generally told of its neighbourhood. But now he failed to hear it. Other sounds filled the air. What was that? A man's voice—English words! Harty rushed forward. A cry, a scream, the tones of the native woman, the shrill cries of her child!

In an instant Harty had dashed through the trees, and beheld near the spring a scene which brought the hot blood to his face, and sent it tingling to his finger-tips.

Two rough men, in the dress of sailors, had seized upon Yokulmah and her boy. One held the woman, the other the child, whose piercing shrieks rang through the air. The water-jar of the native lay shivered at their feet. Those which stood near, Harty saw at a glance, had been brought from an English ship. Deliverance then was at hand. Did he think of it? Was his first thought for himself? To the honour of the English boy let it be told,—his first thought was for his benefactress.

"Let her go!" he shouted, as he darted forward.

The man turned, and in his amazement loosed his hold of the woman, but she only sprang towards her child, and wildly held out her arms. Both the men looked thunderstruck.

"Who on earth are you?" cried one, as he gazed on the fair young face of the boy, who dauntlessly confronted him.

"Give up that child!" cried Harty. "What right have you to meddle with these harmless people?"

"Right indeed!" returned the man. "We have the right. We are going to take them aboard—take them to England for a show maybe! Here, Tom, avast there; you can circumvent the woman. Leave the youngster to me!"

Harty sprang aside. Quick as thought he had seized on the light spear, which Yokulmah had placed against a tree when she went to the spring. He darted between the man and the poor mother. "Dare to come near her, and you will have it in your face," he cried. "It is poisoned! I warn you! You will not draw another breath."

The brutal fellow turned pale. He uttered an oath.

"Who are you, with your white face and your English tongue?"

"Never mind who I am," repeated Harty. "Give me the child, and be off, or I'll raise the cry that will bring the whole tribe upon you in two seconds."

"Chuck the cub over to the woman," growled the fellow to his mate. The other man put the boy down. The mother snatched him to her breast, and sprang away; but she went no further than the edge of the wood, whence she eagerly gazed upon the disputants.

"At least let us take the jars; we have filled them," growled the man. Harty stepped back. He saw, as in a dream, the men hoist the water-jars upon their shoulders, and move off. He kept between them and his friends, the woman and her child. He held the spear still poised. He never turned his eyes from the cowards, who might yet seek to take their prey unawares. But when they had disappeared, when he fully awoke to the truth that the chance had been so near—that an English ship, no doubt bound for home, for England, was there, within hail—then,



indeed, bitter regret rose within his heart. His hand dropped to his side, and, with a heavy sigh, he turned to where Yokulmah stood, clasping her rescued treasure. The gentle native came forward, with a heart full of gratitude, for the service he had rendered her. She knelt down, placed her child beside her; then, laying her head upon the ground, she lifted Harty's foot, and placed it on her head, signifying, by the action, that he was master of her life and of her child's, whom he had saved once more. Harty quickly helped her to rise, and shook his head, while he kissed the baby boy, and took him in his arms, trying to banish the thought of his own disappointment by calming the excitement of the child, who clung to him as if for protection. But the instinct of the savage was as quick as her gratitude. She marked the downcast look of the white boy. She read his thoughts. She looked in his face—a long, sad look. Then she lifted her child from his arms, and, taking Harty by the wrist, she hurried him forward in a direction he had never yet taken, by a path wholly new to him. Hurriedly she led the way, Harty following in amazement. In a short time they suddenly emerged upon a little bay. The woman shrank back, but pointed out before her. There, to Harty's wonder and delight, he beheld a glorious ship, the English colours flying. A boat was returning from the shore, doubtless the one which had brought the wretches he had routed.

Yokulmah gazed into the boy's face. The bright look which overspread it must have told her the truth, had she not already guessed it. She sighed and drooped her head, but once more made a sign to him to follow her.

A few steps brought them to a small cove, where a canoe

lay hidden among rushes. A pair of rude oars were within. Yokulmah pointed to the skiff, then to the ship, and waved both her hands. Her meaning was plain. She bade him fly, and showed him the means of escape. For a minute Harty did hesitate. At the last there was regret at parting with his benefactress, and his dusky playfellow. That minute the poor mother watched him hopefully. But it was soon past. Harty put into her hand the spear he had till now retained. He kissed the baby boy and his gentle mother. Then he pushed the canoe off from the shore, and sprang lightly in.



A small, white flag at the stern went fluttering out gaily, as the boy plied his oars, and stood out across the smooth blue waters, to the ship.

When the native child realized his friend's departure, he uttered a loud cry, and stretched out his little arms.

Harty looked across and waved his hand. Yokulmah sent forth a low, pained wail, then, clasping her boy, she sped away into the woods. When Harty next looked they were gone, and he saw them no more.



## CHAPTER XX.

### A FRIEND IN NEED.

“Is the poor lady so *very* ill then?”

“She is just as bad as she can be. It’s the fever she has caught, and I can’t keep her here. I shall have every one of my guests going away for fear of catching it.”

“But her friends have been written to, I suppose.”

“Oh, yes. The little girl wrote to them, somewhere away near Clumpton, I believe. But I can’t keep her here till they come. Everybody is so afraid of the fever. We can’t get a nurse to stay with her for love or money.”

“I don’t see what you are to do; you can’t turn a poor sick creature out of doors.”

“I expect she will have to be taken to the hospital. If we could find a nurse it would not be so bad; but, as I tell you, we can’t.”

The speakers were the landlord of the hotel at Gratemill, and a neighbour who had looked in. They were talking about poor Aunt Charlotte, whom we left, if you will remember, after she and Dolly had been visiting the sick boy in the caravan. The poor lady was very weak and weary, with her long journey; and when she arrived

at the hotel she at once went to bed. In the morning she was too ill to rise. At first she thought she was only fatigued, and would soon be better; but she grew worse; a doctor had to be sent for, and soon it was found that she had a bad fever, most likely caught from the sick boy whose dying-bed she had so kindly tended.

Here was a terrible hindrance to their journey. Alone, in a strange place, with none of the comforts of home, and not one friendly face to look upon. Poor little Dolly was indeed wretched. The doctor advised her to write at once to her friends, and the little girl wrote a very nice letter to Mrs. Fairbairn, telling her of the trouble they were in. Aunt Charlotte grew rapidly worse. The servants of the hotel had their work to do, and were unable to spare time for nursing her. Soon she became delirious, and poor Dolly had the misery of hearing her dear aunt talking, in a sad rambling way, about Harty, and all their weary wanderings. Sometimes she fancied they had found him; sometimes she cried out she saw him drowning, or being ill-treated. And she would speak exactly as though she actually saw these things; while poor Dolly could only stand by the bedside, and weep bitterly; for her aunt was quite unconscious of her presence.

"Oh! if she should die," was the thought constantly present in the mind of the forlorn child. And now she had heard, that, as no proper nurse could be found, the only thing would be to take the poor dear invalid to the hospital.

And what would become of her? Of course she could not go with her aunt. She must be left here in a strange house, with strange people! Dolly believed her heart would surely break! Oh! Harty, what misery your one

unthinking act has led to! One of the servants tapped at her door. Since her aunt's illness the little girl had occupied a separate chamber.

"If you please, miss, there is some one wishes to speak to you. It's the woman that washes—"

Before she could finish the sentence, the door was hurriedly opened, and a respectable-looking, elderly woman came hastily into the room.

"Forgive me, miss," she said, "I couldn't help it! I was so anxious about this!"

Dolly looked at her, wondering. The woman held up a handkerchief.

"It was with your things, miss,—I do some of the washing for the hotel—this! I knew it in a moment! I asked who had sent it out, and they told me. Oh! my dear young lady, where *did* you have it?"

Dolly remembered, it was the handkerchief she had found on the hedge, after the unhappy deserter had gone. It had been thrown in with the linen sent to wash; she had thought no more of it.

"That handkerchief? Oh! it is not mine," she said. "I found it; I think it belonged to a poor soldier, he had been sitting down there." She hesitated. "He was tired, it was very warm, and I think he had tried to wipe his face—"

The woman waited to hear no more. She had taken the girl's hands between her own, and clasped them tight.

"Bless you!" she said fervently, "bless your sweet face! It was you gave my boy the cup of water, when he was faint and thirsty! He told me in his letter. God bless you for it!"

There were tears in her eyes ; and the servant, who had waited full of curiosity, had her apron up, and was sobbing. There was such real gratitude in the tones of the woman's voice, it must have touched any one who listened.

"Are you his mother ? asked Dolly kindly ; "you did not die, then. I am glad you got better."

"I got better, thank Heaven !" rejoined the woman. "I believe the sight of my boy turned the tide. I didn't know then, dear, what I learnt afterwards." She looked into Dolly's face, and the little girl understood that the poor mother did not wish to speak, before the servant, of her son's desertion.

"But, dear heart," said the woman suddenly, "it's your mother that is ill here, isn't it ?"

"My aunt," said Dolly ; "but so good and kind, I love her next to my mother."

"And they want a nurse, and they will let her stay here if you find a nurse ?" she turned to the servant.

"Yes," replied the girl, "but it is the fever, and very bad ; the doctor says whoever nurses her must keep to the room."

"Of course, of course," exclaimed the woman, "don't I know what illness is ? haven't I been through it all, out in India ? worse fevers than ever you have here !"

As she spoke she was unpinning her shawl, taking off her bonnet, smoothing down her white apron, and settling her neat cap. And her kind eyes were fixed on Dolly all the time.

"Will you nurse my aunt ?" asked Dolly, with glad surprise.

"Ay, that I will, deary ! and gladly ! Do you think I

wouldn't do that, and more, for one who had been good to my boy, my only one?"

She turned to the maid: "Will you show me the lady's room?" she said.

"I had better speak to my master first," said the girl.

"I can soon satisfy the doctor as to my nursing," the woman said; "and you know my cottage, my niece lives with me; if your boy may go there with a message she will send me all my things, and I shan't need to leave the room, and you need only to put the dishes and basins outside the door."

The servant left the room. Then the woman came up close to Dolly; and put both her withered hands on the little fresh face, and turned it up, and kissed her very lovingly.

"Bless you, again and again, darling child," she said; "and I thank God I've been spared to see you, and that a way has been shown me to do you a service—you and yours."

"Did they hurt him?" said Dolly, in a whisper.

The poor mother shook her head.

"They didn't dare be very hard on him, deary; for he had asked leave, and been refused by a cross-grained man in command, who owed him a grudge. There is no better man in the service than my Dermot, though he is my son. His father, and *his* father before him, lost life and limb in their country's service; they couldn't be *very* hard on him."

"I am glad of that," said Dolly, and she drew a breath of relief.

"Bad enough, though, deary, for he has lost a chance of promotion for awhile, but he will make up for it; and it will not go to his discredit in the long-run, that he

dared punishment to see his poor old mother for the last time, as he thought."

"How glad he would be, when he knew you were better," said sympathizing Dolly; "he seemed quite to believe you would not get well."

"Ah!" sighed the mother, "God is good, and spared me. Oh! how often I have pictured to myself the dear face Dermot told me about in his letter, and little did I think I should ever see it!"

The servant now entered, with glad permission from her master that Mrs. McCurry should assume the post of nurse by the sick lady. The doctor had just come, and she could accompany him to the sick-room. Mrs. McCurry at once followed her. She passed her hand lightly over Dolly's head as she left her. "Cheer up, deary!" she said; "never you doubt but we'll bring the good lady through safe enough. I've no fears."

Those hopeful words were precious comfort to poor, forlorn Dolly.

A friend had been found when she least expected it—a willing, able friend. In one short hour all seemed changed. She had felt so utterly lost and forsaken, with her dear, helpless sick aunt; but now such succour had arrived, the most to be depended on—the aid of a grateful heart.

How little Dolly thought, when she held the cup of cold water to the lips of the thirsty soldier, that the result of that trifling act of charity would be fraught with help and consolation in her utmost time of need.

Since our slightest actions do so constantly bring forth fruit, how careful we should be to take the side of duty and kindness; for from evil deeds and thoughts we may



be certain no good *can* come. But many weary days and nights of anxious suspense were to follow. Aunt Char-



lotte suffered long and terribly. She was brought very near to death, and during the time of her painful illness she knew not whose kindly hands tended her so skilfully.

Good Mrs. Fairbairn came to Gratemill, and would have taken Dolly back with her, as she found she could do nothing to serve the invalid.

"She could not be in better hands," the doctor told them. "A more skilful and untiring nurse it would be impossible to find."

But no one else was admitted to the sick-chamber.

Dolly, however, could not be induced to leave the place, and Mrs. Fairbairn was not able to stay away entirely from home. So she and her husband came in turns to pass a day or two with the lonely child.

And one day came the joyful news that Aunt Charlotte was out of danger, that the fever had left her, and that she knew her friends, and had asked for her dear little niece.

"I must tell you, too," added the doctor, "that the

lady owes her recovery chiefly to the faithful watching and good nursing of Mrs. McCurry."

That good woman had her reward when they all blessed and thanked her in turn. It was a joyful day when Dolly and her friend were admitted to the room of the poor invalid, though there was no news yet of Harty. So much to talk of and to arrange. Aunt Charlotte had then to learn who it was that had been her kind nurse; and the story was told of the young deserter, and the handkerchief which had been the means of bringing the poor mother to the knowledge of her son's little unknown friend. Aunt Charlotte was still too weak to make the journey to Sherway, even if she could have borne to return to the Cottage.

She longed to be near the sea still, and, as the time was now very near when Mr. and Mrs. Winwood were expected to return, it was settled they should go to stay at a pleasant sea-side village not very far from Southampton.

"I don't know how it is," said poor Aunt Charlotte one day, as they all sat together, when she was able to be downstairs again, "I always believe that, if we do find our dear Harty again, it will be near the sea."

"Oh! aunty, we *shall* find him, shan't we?" said Dolly, who sat on a low stool at her aunt's feet. Since her illness she had seemed unable to quit that dear friend for an instant.

"I trust so, my darling," said her aunt, in a low voice.

"I have not a doubt about it myself," said Mr. Fairbairn briskly. "We read every day of boys turning up who had been led by some freak to absent themselves."

"I think it more certain, as time goes on, that it will be so," put in his wife. "At first, I own, I was fearful

some accident had befallen the dear fellow ; but we must have heard if that had been the case. Depend on it, Master Harty took himself off in a huff, and when the result of his freak is past we shall see him again."

"If only it might be before my brother returns," sighed Aunt Charlotte.

"It was fortunate so far that they were delayed again," said Mr. Fairbairn. "As they had requested you not to write, they would not be alarmed at not hearing from you."

"They would have been here ere now, but for that delay," said Aunt Charlotte.

"So that was really a benefit, was it not?" said Mrs. Fairbairn.

"Ay, we never know," said good Mrs. McCurry cheerfully : "what we think to be but a hindrance turns out our greatest blessing. We must never despair ; that's certain. And now, ma'am, it is time for your drive."

"You are certainly a blessing to me," said poor Aunt Charlotte, with a faint smile.

Mr. and Mrs. Fairbairn were to drive with Aunt Charlotte, and, as they went forward, Mrs. McCurry followed with shawls and cushions.

"You see, my dear," she said softly to Dolly, "we must just do all we can to keep up your aunt's spirits. It preys more upon her, because she in a way blames herself for your brother's loss, and she can't get it out of her mind but your parents will blame her likewise."

"Indeed," said Dolly, "aunt was never to blame. Nobody was to blame—"

She stopped. She could not accuse her poor lost Harty. Yet who else was to blame ?



## CHAPTER XXI.

### A LOST TREASURE RESTORED.

"I HAVE brought another old friend, who was very anxious to see you," said Mr. Fairbairn one morning, when he came down to the new home which Aunt Charlotte and Dolly had made for themselves for a time. Good Mrs. McCurry was with them too, for she would not leave the invalid till she was quite restored.

"A friend!" said Dolly, looking up eagerly, "who can it be?"

She was not left long in doubt, for, with a joyful bark, dear old Bannock came bounding in, and Dolly started up to meet him. It would be difficult to say whose pleasure was the greatest at the meeting.

"The poor fellow was pining himself away up at home," said Mr. Fairbairn. "He passed half his time on the road, between my house and the Cottage, looking for some of you, I suppose; and I thought he might just as well be here, now you can take your walks along the beach and through the lanes. With Bannock for a companion nothing can harm you, Dolly."

"It was kind of you, dear Mr. Fairbairn!" said the

little girl. "I am glad to have dear old Bannock again." As for the dog, he rushed from one to the other, licking hands and wagging his tail; then, with a final caress of Mr. Fairbairn, as much as to thank him, the faithful creature lay down at Dolly's feet with a sigh of satisfaction, and lay gazing up into her face, as if he were quite happy. But after awhile he rose again, made the circuit of the room, acquainted himself with all the corners, and stood on his hind legs to gaze from the window. Then he whined and went to the door, and, that being opened, he walked sedately down the garden, and stood looking up and down the road from the gate. Then he uttered a low growl at a rough-looking man who passed, came back to the house, and, finally, lay down on the mat in the entry, with his nose between his paws, and one eye blinking towards the door, as if keeping watch.

Evidently he still missed his old playfellow Harty.

And now, as Aunt Charlotte went out in the hand-carriage, which could only be used on the level road, she desired Dolly to take her walks with Bannock for a companion, and together these two enjoyed many a pleasant ramble, and found out all the curious nooks and corners on the beach, and Dolly gathered shells and sea-weed to her heart's content.

Of course, not a day passed but letters were written, and advertisements printed, about Harty, and much information was received and false alarms given. But they had learned to be careful how they believed in these now, and a little inquiry soon proved the tidings to be useless.

Poor Dolly was getting used to the sight of the bills pasted up in the streets, and even on the cliff, with the full

description of her lost brother and the clothes he had worn at the time of his disappearance. Two hundred pounds was a great deal of money, and such a reward would certainly have brought correct information, if only the offer had been seen by the persons who could give the news.

And now Dolly was beginning to look forward to the arrival of her parents, and, in spite of the terrible tidings which they would have to hear, she longed to see them.

An idea had taken possession of the child that, once her father and mother were in England, they would find her brother. True, nothing seemed to have been left undone which could be done, yet to Dolly it seemed impossible that her father and mother should be restored to her and yet their circle incomplete.

"Oh! they will surely find some way that has not been tried. Surely, if dear Harty is alive, my father will find him for us!"

The days were clear and bright, but cool, and growing short, so that Dolly's walks became of less length. But this day she had taken a fresh route, and, instead of going down to the beach, she had wandered inland, and found herself all at once in a spot which reminded her very much of the wood near Sherway, which bordered the home field at the Fairbairns'.

The grass and moss grew thick under foot. The trees stood in clumps. It was not a wood, and between them she could see glimpses of the sea, with the white sails of the ships coming and going.

"I wonder how long it will be before the ship comes with father and mother in," Dolly said to herself.

Some bright berries on a tree near caught her eye: she

gathered as many as she could reach on tiptoe. Then a group of ferns near were espied, and she knew some of these would please her aunt.

"At least she used to be fond of them," said Dolly, with a sigh. "I don't suppose she will care about them now, but I'll gather some."

She had plucked a few, when, growing on a hillock a little farther on, she saw some finer ones, and she climbed up to gather them, Bannock keeping close at her side, and moving when she moved.

All at once she started and stood up and uttered an exclamation of surprise. Well she might!

Right under her ear it seemed, as she stooped to gather the ferns, she had heard the same magic music which she had listened to in the tent at the cricket-match!

At first she could not believe her ears. It must be fancy, or the sound of some distant church bells on the evening breeze. She bent her head again over the clump of ferns, and again the soft, sweet strains of the musical box were plain to her. She even remembered the very tune, and while she yet listened the change came, with the "click" and the "whirr;" and the tune that followed she recalled as having been the same when, with her friend Annie Fairbairn, she sat in the tent at the cricket-match.

Here was magic indeed, thought Dolly.

She stood up and looked round.

Then she saw that she was on the top of a steep bank, and that below ran a narrow roadway.

With very little difficulty she made her way down the sandy bank, and stood in the path below. Here she found herself facing the door of a tiny cottage, built close

to the bank. In fact, the back part of it ran under the earth, and the chimney came out at the top, close to where the clump of ferns grew, which almost hid it from view, especially as the foliage of the trees made a dusky shade about the spot. The door stood open, the music still played on, and Dolly naturally drew near, amazed beyond expression. Bannock kept close at her side, and as she approached the cottage, and looked in, she saw a lad seated on a low stool, leaning his head on his hand, and apparently wrapt up in listening to the musical box, which, sure enough, lay on the table in front of him.



Dolly came near enough to recognize it, before the boy looked up and his eyes met hers.

Dolly thought she had never seen such a beautiful face. It was like the picture of an angel she had once seen in a book. Such large, soft, brown eyes, such pink and white cheeks, and long, curling hair. Something in the face amazed her, too; it did not look like that of any other child she had ever seen. He gazed at her in silence for a few moments, and then, snatching up the box, he uttered



a strange, wild cry, more like a frightened animal than a human being. At that sound a woman came quickly from an inner room, and began soothing the boy as if he had been a baby, though he was taller than Dolly. Then she came forward to where the little girl and her dog still stood in the doorway.

"What might ye want, miss, please?" she said in no very pleasant voice. "You've frightened my poor lad with your black dog there, and now I'll have no peace with him this night."

"I am very sorry indeed if we frightened him," said Dolly. "It was the music. I heard it—" She hesitated.

"Ah! the music box; well, it's all the poor lad has to please him. Goodness knows he hasn't much, poor soul!"

"Did you buy it?" timidly asked Dolly, "we had one like it—it was lost."

"*Lost!*" repeated the woman quickly; "well, then, what is lost may be found, mayn't it, missie?"

She spoke rudely, and Dolly was almost sorry she had come.

The boy, still hugging the musical box, made a movement towards the door, and as he appeared in the full light Bannock made a spring towards him, then stood growling savagely. The boy screamed, and jabbered something, which to Dolly was quite unintelligible.

"What do you mean, young lady," cried the woman, half angry, half afraid, "What do you mean, by bringing your great, ugly dog here, frightening my poor boy almost to death. Go away wi' ye!"

And she made as though she would have pushed to the door against Dolly.

But Bannock, who had planted himself right in front of his young mistress, now showed his teeth, and looked so angry, that the woman hesitated, and in her turn looked frightened.

"He won't hurt you," Dolly said quietly. "He won't, indeed, hurt any one, unless they offer to meddle with me."

"My poor boy was frightened badly by a dog that tore his clothes," said the woman tearfully.

Bannock kept his eyes warily fixed upon the lad.

"My dog seems to know him I think," said Dolly. "Where did he find the musical box, pray tell me?"

The woman began to sob.

"Don't you see, miss, that the poor fellow hasn't got his right senses? He does not know, he finds things here or there, what he takes a fancy to, and he thinks no harm. I keep him with me all I can, but I've my living and his to earn, and what can I do?"

"I am sorry," said Dolly gravely, for she did not think the boy's mother was a good woman, though she pitied her too.

"I know the lady who lost the box. She would be so glad to get it again," said Dolly. "Would you give it to me, if I gave you money enough to buy another musical box, or anything he might like better?"

"Well, indeed," returned the woman, "I don't know. It's hard work getting anything from him he has once taken a fancy to. But I would try, I'm sure, gladly." She went towards her son. At the first move she made Bannock was on the alert, and growled so fiercely that Dolly laid her hand upon his head to soothe him.

The mother spoke to her boy for some minutes, but he

only jabbered some broken words, and hid the musical box under his patched clothes.

"He has had it a long while," said the mother, with tears in her eyes. "It's the only amusement he has, and he's that fond of music he would leave his victuals any time to follow a band for miles."

"How strange!" said Dolly. She looked with pity at the beautiful face of the idiot boy. Now she knew what gave it that strange look. There was no expression or intelligence in the lovely features.

The woman saw the look of sympathy.

"Never mind, miss," she said; "don't you take notice now, I'll get it away somehow when he's asleep, and you shall have it."

"I'll bring the money," Dolly began, but the woman shook her head. "It will be no use coming here, miss, we are going away from this to-morrow."

Dolly was about to speak, when the woman hurriedly held up her hand, and turned to close the door.

"I can't stand talking any longer," she said harshly. And in a moment she had gone in and closed the door, leaving the little girl and her faithful companion outside.

There were footsteps coming up the lane, and Dolly had not gone far when she met her aunt's kind nurse, good Mrs. McCurry, coming to look for her.

"Ay, my dear, we got anxious about ye, where have ye been? Your aunt was so uneasy, that I offered to come and find you. I told her surely no harm could come to you; but, of course, it's only natural she should be fearful, after all that's happened."

Dolly told her of her recent adventure.

"They are just gipsies, and it's best to have nothing to do with them," said Mrs. McCurry.

"It was so strange that Bannock seemed to know the boy," said Dolly.

She had forgotten, no doubt, if they had ever told her, how the dog had very nearly pounced upon some one in the wood at Fairbairn's, and had all but captured the thief.

"But shall we really get the box again do you think?" asked Dolly, of Mrs. McCurry, as they pursued their way homeward. It was getting rapidly dusk, and Bannock, in the knowledge that his mistress had a companion, was now some distance ahead.

"I don't think, dearie, there's much chance of it," replied her friend, "unless we send the police to look after this woman and her boy."

"Oh! not for the world!" exclaimed Dolly eagerly. "Only think, dear Mrs. McCurry, the poor fellow is silly, and really does not know he is doing wrong."

"I doubt he's not so foolish as that comes to, my dear," returned the good woman. "Anyway, I don't think we'll see the music box in a hurry."

"It would be so dreadful for his poor mother," said kind little Dolly. "I would not do anything to hurt him, poor fellow, though I should like the box."

They reached home, and Dolly had to relate her adventure to Aunt Charlotte, who had been, indeed, terribly anxious at Dolly's absence.

"You need not have been afraid, aunty," said the little girl; "if you had only seen how Bannock guarded me. Oh! he was quite fierce."

When Dolly opened the window in the morning, to let

in the sweet, fresh air, there, on the broad window-ledge, half hidden by the creeper which grew about the casement, lay the little musical box. It was wrapped in a piece of coarse whitey-brown paper, on which were some words in a scrawling hand. With difficulty Dolly made out the following:—

“I have brought back the box, but we couldn’t take your money after your kind words in standing up for us.”

That was all. How the woman had found out where she lived, or had heard the words spoken between her and Mrs. McCurry, Dolly could not guess.

She ran to show the long-lost box to her aunt. But what she heard, when she reached Aunt Charlotte’s room, put even this surprise from her mind for that occasion.





## CHAPTER XXII.

### HOMEWARD BOUND.

"It is a bird upon the water!"

"Or a large fish!"

"I believe 'tis just the sun shining on a wave."

"No, indeed! I can make out a sail or a flag, or something."

"It is a flag. It is a skiff or a canoe."

"A native canoe coming off from the island, no doubt."

"Hand the glass here."

Such were the exclamations, conjectures, and surmises, poured forth by the idlers on the deck of the ship *Caprice*, bound for England from China.

The speculations were drawn from them by the sight of poor Harty's little white flag, fluttering over his head, as he pulled with might and main across the waters.

"It is a canoe," exclaimed the one who had looked through the glass; "but I can make out only one person in it—a native by the dress, yet small of stature."

"A woman maybe," said another. "These poor creatures row, and fish, and toil in every way more than the men. No doubt she has bead-work or fruits to sell."

"The canoe makes good way, anyhow!"

The small knot of observers increased. In the monotony of a voyage the most trivial incident has a wonderful interest. Soon the skiff was perceived by the men in the ship's boat, and the idea which possessed them was that Harty was the bearer of a complaint to the ship.

"Give way, my lads; we must be aboard before him, and make our own story good," said the mate, he whom Harty had baulked of his intended prize.

But the canoe was made for speed, and the boy was light, and had made good use of the experience he had gained while on his first voyage.

He seemed to skim the water like a bird, as they had said; and, to the surprise of those on board, they soon made out that the supposed native was at least possessed of European features; though, even during his brief sojourn on the island, the constant exposure had tanned Harty to the hue of a native islander.

Soon the little canoe was within hail of the *Caprice*, and, in round, full tones of unmistakable English, the young oarsman hailed the vessel. Twenty voices responded in a cheer, twenty pair of hands were held out to assist in his ascent to the deck. The captain came forward; several passengers, among them some ladies, crowded round. The interest was increasing.

"Well, my lad," said the captain, all amazement, "where do you come from? who are you? what do you want?"

"I came off from that island," was Harty's reply. So long it was since he had heard the sound of his own voice, it sounded strange to him.

"I was left there, I don't know how long ago. I want to get home to England; for mercy's sake, don't refuse to take me. If not to England, pray, sir, let me sail with you, let me be with English people again." His voice seemed to choke in his throat. He trembled with anxiety. He dreaded lest they might refuse him.

"Take you, my lad!" said the captain of the *Caprice*, cheerily. "Of course I'll take you, and glad. But come with me, and



we must see if we can't find some garments a little more civilized for you. Afterwards we'll hear all about it. The ladies will be delighted to listen to your story."

Harty clasped his hands, with gratitude at his heart, as he followed the captain. He was thankful, though he knew not yet whether the ship was homeward bound. But he was among his own countrymen once more.

If he had given much thought to the matter, he might have remembered that he had met with more tenderness and kindly affection, among the poor natives, than on board



the ship where Sam, the cabin-boy, had persecuted his life. As Harty followed the captain, the crew of the boat which had been to the island came up the vessel's side.

The mate and his companion, who had alone been the subjects of the adventure at the spring, learning that Harty had said nothing of their conduct, resolved to keep their own counsel.

The little canoe, having done its work well, had been sent adrift, and would doubtless find its way back to the small creek, where, lying hid, poor Yokulmah had watched the safe escape of her young white friend, whose longing she had so unselfishly fulfilled.

There was great impatience, and much curiosity at work all through the ship, to learn the history of this young adventurer, who had so suddenly appeared on board.

Soon Harty came forth, attired in a suit belonging to a young gentleman, a passenger, who had kindly volunteered the offer of his clothes.

In this more suitable attire it was easy to see that the lad had been well born and brought up.

"Now, my man," said the captain kindly, "there will be no peace on board until the ladies know your story; so just you go among them, and tell it all, chapter and verse."

And Harty did. I cannot say that he began at this tale began, and told everything, right from the day of his running off into the wood. I fancy he commenced at the end rather. For first one lady asked, "How ever he got that odd dress he wore on the island." Then another asked, "Were the savages kind to him?" And again a question was eagerly put, "How did he get on the island at first?"

Harty had enough to do in making answers. So the end of his story was told before the beginning.

But when he did find the chance to tell how he had played truant, and had fallen asleep in the wood, and that this had been the real cause of all his disasters, he spoke so frankly, and owned his fault so honestly, that all were at once interested in him.

He blamed no one; for Hawkins and Larcom, who carried him on board, had done it for the best, he said; and even of the wretched Sam, who had caused him so much misery, he only said, "Ah! poor fellow, he was killed! I saw him go down, struck with an arrow."

Harty had certainly profited by his misfortunes. He had learned to take blame to himself, and to excuse the faults of others in all he could.

While he was detailing some of the incidents at home, he happened to name Captain Crowe, and a gentleman who had been listening said,—

"Do you know Captain Crowe?"

"Yes, indeed," Harty replied, "and his son Willie, too. He was my schoolfellow."

"And your name is Winwood?" said the gentleman. "I remember the captain often speaking of your father. I sailed with Captain Crowe several times. We are great friends. He is a fine fellow."

The speaker shook hands with Harty, and seemed very much pleased. Their both knowing good Captain Crowe was like an introduction.

There was much satisfaction expressed with the way in which the boy had told his story, with such straightforward truth and modesty. He said nothing of the scene

at the spring, for he knew the men would get into trouble, were it known, and that it would seem like boasting of his own courage to tell what he had done.

The mate soon learned this fact, and, when Harty had been some days on board, the man said to him,—

“I owe you a good turn, youngster, for keeping a still tongue in your head. You are a bold fellow, and a wise one too. My messmate and I had had a drop too much to drink, or you may be sure we shouldn’t have acted so foolish. But you’re a staunch lad, and if ever I can serve you, you’ll see I will.”

Little, indeed, did Harty think when, and in what manner, that good turn would be repaid. These were pleasant days he now enjoyed. They almost made him forget the grief and anxiety which those belonging to him must be enduring. He was travelling rapidly homeward.

The gentleman who had spoken of Captain Crowe knew the part of the country where Harty’s home was well; and he had promised to travel down with him, and restore him safely to his friends.

So there was no fear of any further accidents, and already the boy was enjoying in anticipation the delight of telling all his adventures to Dolly and his aunt. He fancied he could see the widely-opened eyes of his little sister, and hear her exclamations of amazement at the recital of all he had seen. Truly he would have as many tales to tell, and as wonderful, as those Peter Pranks had been used to relate to them in the cottage at Sherway.

He was made quite a pet of by the passengers. Very different, indeed, was his position now to what it had been with Hawkins, and Sam, the cruel cabin-boy. He

sat at the captain's table; he shared in all the luxuries of every meal. The passengers did not know how to be kind enough to him. The ladies lent him books; one taught him to play chess, and they were never tired of having him to sit with them, and talk of his country home, and the dear ones there. The officers of the *Caprice*, too, were quite prepared to make much of him, and with them Harty soon became quite at home. This was the life at sea as he had pictured it to himself. He learned so quickly all he saw going on around him, that it became a favourite thing with the seamen to answer his questions, and volunteer instruction in every portion of their duties. The *Caprice* was, of course, a very different sort of vessel to the small trader on which Harty had first made the acquaintance of the ocean. All was kept in such trim order, and discipline so perfect was observed; there was all the difference which there is between a fine, well-furnished, well-kept mansion, and a small, dingy, shabbily-fitted house.

"You will make a fine sailor yourself one of these days," said the captain to Harty, one morning; when the boy had been eagerly assisting at the taking of an observation.

"I used to think I should be one," Harty said thoughtfully.

"Well, have you changed your mind?" asked the captain.

"I don't quite know," returned the lad; "if all ships were like this I should like it; but they are not, you know."

The captain, and the officers who stood by, laughed. They were pleased, as sailors always are, by the compliment to their ship.

"There are not many will beat the *Caprice* certainly," observed one.

"But we'll find as good for Winwood when his time comes," said another.

"Perhaps his mother may have a voice in the matter," remarked a lady.

"Ah! yes," said Harty, and his eyes grew sad, as they always did when he thought of his parents, and remembered the grief they would have suffered from the knowledge of his loss. He was not aware, of course, how, by the intended return of his father and mother and the subsequent delay, they still remained in ignorance of the disappearance of their son from home, as they had received no letters. So far the voyage of the *Caprice* had been a pleasant one. The weather had been delightfully warm, yet tempered by delicious breezes from the sea. The ladies sat upon deck all day, and half the night. There were musical gatherings; for one gentleman played the flute, another the violin, there were a harp and piano on board, and several of the passengers had sweet voices. Singing, playing, reading, story-telling, chess-playing, watching the beautiful sunsets over the sea, and in a hundred pleasant ways passing the days which were drawing them nearer to their homes. So sped the time away. One morning, when Harty came on deck, he saw a group assembled at one end of the vessel. On joining them, he found all were occupied in watching the movements of some singular-looking, large-headed fish; which chased each other, and leaped now and again half out of the sea, displaying the most brilliant colours. To his surprise Harty saw that the sailors regarded these fish with

great disfavour, and kept looking anxiously to see whether they had dispersed. But the creatures kept on steadily in the wake of the ship, and turned neither to right nor left, by so much as an inch. Steadily on the track of the *Caprice* they held, and when night fell, and the stars and the moon rose, they were still dimly to be seen, pursuing their silent way.

"What an odd superstition that is of the sailors!" observed a gentleman at the supper-table in the saloon.

"Which superstition particularly? for all seafaring men are superstitious, I think," replied a lady.

"That the appearance of those dolphins is the forerunner of a storm," said the gentleman.

"There is not much sign of any storm in that lovely sky," was the remark.

Harty heard the talk. He had learned, during his short experience at sea, how sudden are the changes of weather. He went quietly on deck, while the other passengers were chatting around the table. The captain and one or two of his officers stood together, anxiously scanning the horizon. Overhead the blue sky and bright stars were still visible; but slowly creeping up, from where the sky and ocean met, came a small, dark cloud, hardly bigger than a man's hand at first. It grew rapidly, and seemed fast overspreading the tranquil space, where the moon had lately shone so bright. A moaning sound, scarcely like the wind, came faintly to the ear. The sailors were busy with sails and ropes, "making all snug," as they said. There was a hushed sense of dread and expectation all around.

"A storm is brewing," said Harty to himself.



## CHAPTER XXIII.

### IN THE OPEN BOAT.

BEFORE morning the storm broke.

The black clouds had spread, and quite blotted out the bright stars and blue sky. The rain poured in torrents, the wind howled through the shrouds of the ships. The thunder growled, as if threatening worse to come.

Forked lightning then split the dark rift of clouds ; and, as it fell, for one instant it lighted up the tossing, foaming, angry sea, that boiled and surged all around.

Louder crashed the thunder overhead, and more swiftly came the lightning, and fiercer and wilder roared the winds.

The poor ship struggled bravely on, now borne aloft on the crest of a billow, as on a mighty hill, now plunged into a foaming waste of waters, struggling as in a whirlpool, from which it was never again to rise.

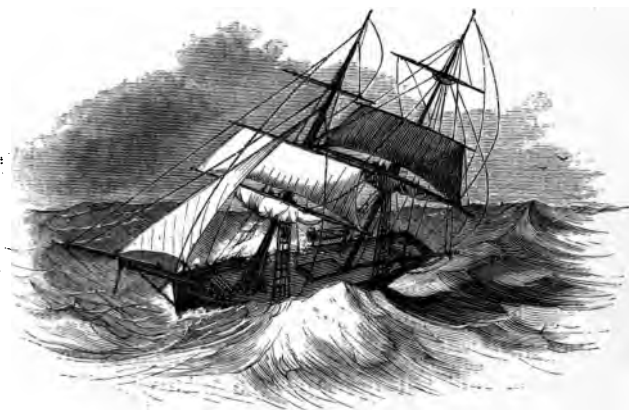
Then would come booming a heavy wave, which crashed against her sides, and the *Caprice* shuddered, like a live thing which had received a death-blow. Yet still she kept bravely on.

But the darkness grew, the wind raved more wildly, and the crash of thunder mingled with the roar of the

waters. It was as if all the elements had combined to destroy the gallant vessel, and the fierce lightning darting around was to light them to their work.

None in the ship slept that night. Too terrified even to lie down in their berths, most of them watched through the dark hours, without taking off their clothes.

Morning dawned, but the storm had not abated. Far as the eye could reach was a gloomy blackness. The



clouds seemed to touch the sea, and close down upon the dark horizon all around. Sheets of rain descended, and the ocean, lashed into fury by the wind, ran mountains high.

A hasty breakfast had been set in the saloon, but few mustered to partake of it, for dread and anxiety had taken away appetite.

Suddenly there was a fearful crash, shrieks and cries resounded through the ship. A mighty billow had dashed over the deck, and overwhelmed the companion ladders, the



saloon, and had even penetrated the berths, where many a poor trembling lady passenger sat shivering in fear.

Another and another wave followed. Two men were swept overboard. The ladies screamed, and clung to anything near them, to avoid being carried away by the flood, which had swamped everything around them, and mounted nearly to their knees.

Then came the order for fastening down the hatches, to keep out the water.

Alas ! what a change from a few days past ! Instead of the gay laughter, the singing, the music, and the pleasant chat, here were a terrified company, confined below decks, lighted only by a glimmering lamp ; deafened by the awful crash of the waves overhead, as they thundered upon the vessel, with a noise like the discharge of cannon ; all around the wailing and howling of the wind, which increased every moment.

Sickness was added to their miseries, for the motion of the ship, violently pitching to and fro, caused the most terrible suffering even to the strongest ; and some serious hurts were inflicted by the force with which they were thrown against one another, while heavy pieces of furniture becoming dislodged, were more than once hurled upon them. So deafening was the din, it was almost impossible for one speaking to be heard. A lady who sat by her husband's side had with difficulty made him understand her question.

"Where is the boy, young Winwood ? I have not seen him."

"Nor I," rejoined her husband. "He was on deck ast night, but I have not seen him since."

"Poor fellow, poor fellow!" the wife said sorrowfully. "So near home!"

"Well, we are all near home. Shall be nearer, please God," said the husband, in a voice he in vain strove to make cheerful. "You must not lose heart in a bit of a gale, my dear."

The lady made no answer. She did not wish her good husband and comforter to know that she had lost heart. She was weeping.

Suddenly there was a terrible crash overhead. It was not the heavy boom of the waves. Above the tempest could be heard cries of dismay, shouts of command; in the pauses of the wind came the trampling of many feet. The terrified passengers listened in agony. It was the more dreadful to them, since they suffered the tortures of suspense, for they knew not what might be happening. And where was Harty? At first he had kept close to the side of his friend, the gentleman who knew Captain Crowe; but when the order was given to close the hatches, and the gentleman, who had a sister on board, went below, Harty had ensconced himself in a corner, where experience had taught him he could be tolerably secure from the wind—the wetting he did not heed. He had sufficient knowledge now to be useful, as he knew, should any occasion present itself.

"I won't be shut down there, while so many brave fellows are risking their lives this night," was Harty's thought.

Ere morning dawned more than one of those brave fellows was no more. The mate saw Harty as the faint light of day spread.

"Shaw and Martin are gone, Master Winwood," said the man solemnly.

Martin was the man who had been with the mate at the spring, he whom Harty had confronted with the spear. When the mast fell, snapped by the wind, like a carrot, another poor fellow was swept overboard, and it was impossible to make the slightest effort to save them. This was the noise which had startled the passengers below. The rain abated, and the thunder and lightning became less violent ; but the wind seemed to increase in fury, and the waves towered higher and higher. They broke with unceasing fury against and over the vessel, and one, more violent than the preceding, carried away her rudder. This loss was temporarily supplied, and the ship's carpenter was at work upon one of the boats, which had been damaged in the gale of the night, when the alarm was raised that a leak had been sprung. Men were told off to the pumps, and at first with good result. The gallant vessel struggled bravely on, like a wounded creature trying to do its best. But the severe strain imposed upon her, by the incessant beating against the gale, told now upon the damaged timbers. All hands that could be spared were now demanded for the pumps. Four of the best men were gone ; several of the passengers volunteered. They worked hard through the hours of that day and the following night. Still the tempest of wind raged. The sky cleared, the moon rose, but the gale still continued, and the sea battled in its utmost fury. Now Harty's brief experience in his numerous duties on board the trading vessel stood him in good stead. He had never lost the "sea legs" which he then acquired. He

kept his footing tolerably, even in the roughest sea ; and his quick intelligence made him valuable to a degree which surprised the captain and officers, who had little thought to find, in the well-bred, pleasant youngster, a hand so thoroughly efficient. For three days the tempest raged ; and when the wind lulled somewhat, the sea still running high, the *Caprice* was beaten far from her track, crippled and injured in herself—short of hands by the men lost and wounded. Still she kept on gallantly.

They set about such repairs as could be effected, and to some extent stopped the leak. Still, the pumps had to be worked. Then a new and terrible difficulty stared them in the face ! The water, gaining in the hold, had injured the stored provisions, to such an extent that it would be scarcely possible to make use of one-half.

The captain held council with his chief officer ; and then, calling his passengers together, he briefly told them that, delayed as the voyage must necessarily be by the crippled state of the vessel, and the deviation from their course, he found himself compelled to put the ship's company on shorter allowance of provisions, to ensure a sufficiency till their arrival in port. The passengers cheerfully agreed to the proposal, and hopefully listened to the captain's assurance that he trusted, now the storm had abated and there was promise of fair weather, that, the damage sustained by the vessel being to some extent repaired, they should be enabled to make good progress.

"There was also the chance," he added, "of falling in with some vessel which might spare them some addition to their stock of provisions."

But everything seemed against the poor *Caprice*.

Only two days after this announcement had been made by the captain, sickness broke out among the sailors.

Three of the best men died. Their bodies were sewn up in sailcloth, with a heavy weight at the feet, and so they were buried in the sea. Several more lay sick and useless. Hands were wanting for the working of the vessel. The pumps could not have been worked, but for the services of the passengers, who did their best; but the leak widened—the water gained, gradually but surely.

There was clearly now no hope for the ship. To remain on board was to meet certain death.

With the boats there might be a chance—nay, two. They were now within a few leagues of a group of islands, on which, could they be reached by the boats, there would be a possibility of finding the means of living until some passing ship should touch there, and so rescue them. There was, besides, the probability that, by slightly altering their course, they should soon fall in with some vessels which, at this season of the year especially, they knew would be on this track. All this was explained by the captain, who throughout had maintained a brave and hopeful aspect, which sustained the courage of all around him. So the boats were lowered and got ready. Supplies of provisions were distributed alike in each, with such few necessities as the space allowed. First, the ladies were placed in the two larger boats, together with their own relatives, husbands, brothers, or fathers. The crew, many of them scarcely able to move through illness, were next lowered to their places; and, lastly, the chief officer and captain. The very last to quit the *Caprice* was her captain. He would fain have stayed in his ship to the

very end; and have gone down with the vessel which had served them so gallantly, and done its best, till crippled and defeated by the cruel storm; but he knew his life was valuable to those who were in his charge. So he took his position in the largest boat, which would lead the way and take the command of the small fleet of three.

And now the word was given to steer clear of the ship, and to give her a wide berth as quickly as possible.

The pumps being deserted, the water rapidly rushed in, and soon the ship began to fill. She sank steadily and slowly before their eyes: the waters gurgled and whirled in the eddy. Had the boats not been at a safe distance they would have quickly been sucked in and swallowed up.

The men rested on their oars. More and more quickly sank the doomed vessel, and louder and faster whirled the waves around her. Then she disappeared beneath them, the sea settled quietly over her, and that was the last ever seen of the poor *Caprice*. A sigh went round from boat to boat. There were tears in the eyes of the captain, and it was in a hoarse voice he commanded the men to take up their oars. A good captain loves his ship like a child or a dear friend, and this one had done her duty bravely. So now they were out in three open boats upon the wide sea. The sky was clear; the waters smooth and calm as a lake. There was not a breath of wind. One faint breeze would now have served them, as they might have hoisted a sail. But it was not to be had, and the oars were all they could trust to. The three boats were commanded by the captain, the chief officer, and the mate. In the last—the smallest boat—was also Harty Winwood. For the first two days all seemed to go well.

The weather was fine, and the boats kept together. He was busy among them, for they made tolerable way. ] soon the constant use of the oars began to tell upon the men, who were, many of them, beginning to feel approach of that illness which had carried off their comrades. Two more of the sick died, and were thrown overboard. The provisions began to run short, and there were no signs of any ship. Then the captain determined making for the islands, which he knew were not far and where at least shelter for the ladies and some kind sustenance must be ensured. They altered their course and on the evening of the third day they came in sight of the islands. That day the weather had been threatening and the boats' companies had been thankful they were to make land, and be at least no longer at the mercy of the elements. But in the night the wind sprang up; the sky was overcast. It blew a gale. When morning came the smaller boat found itself far out at sea. No sight of land or of the other boats, and with no certainty of its whereabouts. They had no compass, and their stock provisions consisted only of a few biscuits. Being a small company, they had depended for stores on the larger boats, which had more room. In this one were the men, five sailors, and Harty. Two of the men were too ill to row. In this terrible plight, when despair might have seized upon the stoutest heart, it was good to see how the brave spirit of the boy rose. He had passed through so many trials and dangers, that he had learned to have faith, and be trustful. He did all he could to comfort the sick men and cheer the others.

"The wind went down as the sun rose," he said  
"that's a good sign."





The weather was fine, and the boats kept together. Hope was busy among them, for they made tolerable way. But soon the constant use of the oars began to tell upon the men, who were, many of them, beginning to feel the approach of that illness which had carried off their comrades. Two more of the sick died, and were thrown overboard. The provisions began to run short, and there were no signs of any ship. Then the captain determined on making for the islands, which he knew were not far off, and where at least shelter for the ladies and some kind of sustenance must be ensured. They altered their course, and on the evening of the third day they came in sight of the islands. That day the weather had been threatening, and the boats' companies had been thankful they were to make land, and be at least no longer at the mercy of the elements. But in the night the wind sprang up; the sky was overcast. It blew a gale. When morning came the smaller boat found itself far out at sea. No sight of land or of the other boats, and with no certainty of its own whereabouts. They had no compass, and their stock of provisions consisted only of a few biscuits. Being in company, they had depended for stores on the larger boats, which had more room. In this one were the mate, five sailors, and Harty. Two of the men were too ill to row. In this terrible plight, when despair might well have seized upon the stoutest heart, it was good to see how the brave spirit of the boy rose. He had passed through so many trials and dangers, that he had learned to have faith, and be trustful. He did all he could to comfort the sick men and cheer the others.

"The wind went down as the sun rose," he said; "*that's a good sign.*"

And truly the gale had lessened, but now the rain poured down.

"That is a blessing anyway," said Harty, "for we wanted fresh water."

The mate started, and the men looked at each other. This was the most dreadful blow of all. There was but one small jar of water in the boat. They spread their clothes to catch the rain as it fell; then they wrung out the water so obtained, and stored it for future use. The wind lessened; they were able to set a small sail, and so spare their arms from rowing. The next day one of the two poor sick fellows died, in the night the other followed. They were wrapped in an old sail, and launched into the sea. Night and day how they prayed to meet with a ship. The wind fell, the sky cleared. The sun shone, but alas! the food was nearly gone, and the water was dealt out in drops. And now, when all was so terrible, came even worse. One of the sailors found a bottle, with rum, in the boat. Reckless with despair, he drank largely of it, and became mad. He fought with his messmates, and in the struggle he fell with another into the sea, and both were drowned! There were now left in the boat only the mate, with another sailor, and the boy. Three biscuits remained, and but a pint of water. That night the sky was so blue, the stars shone out with such brightness, the sea stretched like a mirror all around. Not a sound, but the gentle lapping of the waters against the boat's side, was to be heard.

Suddenly a man's voice broke out into a hymn. It was strange, wild, but very sweet. It was the young sailor. When he ceased singing he began to talk in a low voice.

"We are near home now," he said, "I see them all; there is mother, and little Jane, and the old house. V

wish I had told them we were coming, but it's church time, and I know where—where—to—find."

The voice died away. All was still. Harty touched the mate upon the hand. The man whispered to him,—

"He's wandering, poor fellow. He is going fast. He was a good lad, but he ran away from home. It has always preyed on his mind."

There was no more said. The poor young sailor ceased to breathe.

"He is better off," said the mate, as he laid a sail over the dead man.

Morning broke and found the boat motionless upon a sea like glass. The mate and Harty alone were now left.

The day passed on. The sun shone brightly. The night came and the moon rose. Both were too weak now to use an oar. The water was nearly finished; there remained one biscuit. They shared the half of this—they took each a spoonful of water. They sat and looked death in the face. When that biscuit and that drop of water were done, the end must come. Sometimes they spoke of their companions, and wondered if they had reached the islands. But speech soon became painful, and they ceased to talk. The mate managed to hoist a sail, and made shift to screen Harty from the sun's rays, which beat pitilessly upon them. The boy was thinking—thinking—how the end of all his wanderings was very near. That hour of ill-temper and disobedience, long ago, had led to a terrible termination.

We may imagine his thoughts!

The mate had long felt the sickness creeping over him from which the others had perished. But he made efforts to rouse himself, and to the last spoke cheerfully, for the

boy's sake. Now came a faintness creeping over Harty. He sank down against his companion, and his eyes closed. The mate looked down at the pale, shrunken face and white lips of the boy. He lifted him as well as he could in his weak arms.

"Poor lad! poor lad! He was a brave fellow, and an honourable one too. He didn't deserve to go like this."

Then the mate looked at the half biscuit and the drop of water.

"It's no good sharing that morsel," he muttered. "It might keep the life in one of us, and one never knows what may happen."

He stretched out his hand to the biscuit—then he hesitated.

"Life is sweet. I'd like to see my old place again. He is past suffering now! But there—there, didn't I swear I'd do him a good turn, and I *will*!"

The mate broke the biscuit and fed the boy, who ate it eagerly. Then he held the last drop of water to the poor white lips. Harty swallowed it.

"That's over!" muttered the mate. It was his last effort. He fell back. The insensible figure of the man, and the dying boy, lay in the boat, as it drifted silently on the sea that was smooth as glass.





## CHAPTER XXIV.

“I SAW HIM DIE!”

WHEN Dolly hastened to her aunt's room, eager to tell her of the wonderful recovery of the musical box, she found Aunt Charlotte in a state of great excitement. Since her illness she had not come down to breakfast, and now Dolly found her dressing hurriedly, with the assistance of Mrs. McCurry. Indeed, that good woman could not move quickly enough, so great was the impatience of the lady.

“What is it?” asked Dolly, quite forgetting her own news in seeing her aunt's eager hurry.

“Pranks is here!” exclaimed Aunt Charlotte, as she hastily buttoned her dress awry, and Mrs. McCurry in vain endeavoured to set it right.

“Never mind! never mind!” cried the lady. “Pray give me my shoes and my cap! Oh! be quick, my dear! be quick!”

Dolly was hurrying with the shoes, the nurse with the cap. In her haste, it was a wonder Aunt Charlotte did not put the shoe on her head, or attempt fitting the cap on her foot.

“More haste worse speed,” said the good-natured

woman who was assisting her. "You would be ready sooner, ma'am, if you would only let me."

"He has news of Harty!—news of our dear boy, my child!" said her aunt to Dolly.

"Good news, he hopes, miss!—at least he said he thought it would lead to something."

"Thank you! thank you!" cried poor Aunt Charlotte, in her haste snatching her apron, instead of a pocket-handkerchief, which Mrs. McCurry was handing to her.

Away went Dolly, closely following her aunt. Sure enough, in their sitting-room, awaiting them, there was the pedlar, Peter Pranks. Bannock had found out his old friend, and sat in silent delight, with his head resting on Peter's knee, and lolling his tongue, foolish enough, at least in looks. In thought and deed a dog is wise at times. Pranks did not keep them long in suspense.

"The fact is, ma'am," he said, "it is a man I met with in Nettingly, where I came through, and, resting one evening at a bit of a public there, I heard some talk. It began about dogs." Peter stroked Bannock's head as he spoke.

"I told an anecdote or two of my own experience with the creatures, and that drew them out, and after a bit this man—he was a fisherman, as most of them were—began about a big black dog that had come to their village, followed him, he said, all of a sudden, and then disappeared as suddenly. From what he said, I guessed pretty surely it was Bannock."

The dog looked up quite knowingly in the old man's face, and began licking his hand, just as if to say, "Yes, that was I; all right."

"Well, well!" said Aunt Charlotte.

"Well, ma'am," Peter continued, "I found out enough to be certain that it was your dog that had followed this man; that they had tried to keep him; but that the creature had broke loose the first chance, and took himself off again. If you remember, he had a piece of rope round his neck when he came back."

"Of course, of course!" agreed Aunt Charlotte.

"Well, from that it went on," continued the pedlar, "and I learned by degrees, for I didn't like to question too closely—you'll see why—I learned that Master Harty, or some one very much like him, was carried off by some seafaring men, and put aboard of a trading vessel that stood off not a mile from Nettingly."

Aunt Charlotte clasped her hands. Dolly opened her mouth to speak. Peter held up his hand.

"Now, you see, ma'am, how it was. I thought to myself, whosoever did carry him off—supposing it was your young gentleman—was doing wrong, and they knew it; and whosoever should let on in any way about it would know they were likely to get them into trouble that did so. So the moment I'd have begun asking questions, they would have shut up close, and no more to be learned, and have put them on their guard besides. I hadn't the right, you see, ma'am, and they would know that. But if any one—like yourself, say, or Mr. Fairbairn—belonging to the lad were to go straight to him, asking the questions direct, I think they would get at something."

"Oh! yes, Peter—yes, you are right," said Aunt Charlotte. "I will go at once. You will tell me the name of the man—where is he to be found?"

"As to his name, I don't know it," returned Pranks. "He'll be found safe enough, where his boat lies, at Nettingly. He shares it with another man."

"But the reward, Pranks—the reward? If these men know anything, surely the description—the reward offered—would have brought them forward?"

"Begging your pardon, ma'am, I don't think so," returned the pedlar. "You see, they have their living. They don't hanker after money, seeing they have all they want, and wouldn't know the use of more. And they would have a dread of getting any one into trouble, and of being mixed up with the law maybe; and all that would keep them quiet, even if they could put things together to make it out clear."

"But the wickedness of it, Pranks! To know that a boy—a dear boy—was taken from his friends!"

"That is true, ma'am," said Peter; "but they wouldn't know the whole rights of the story, and it don't strike them, I daresay, that a sea life is anything of a hardship. However, I brought you the news, such as it is, right off, for I knew you could act upon it better than I."

"I can never thank you enough, Pranks!" cried Aunt Charlotte. "I must send to Mr. Fairbairn—he will help me; for I fear I am not strong enough to act alone. But no time shall be lost. Yes, my dear! I will come to breakfast."

This was said in answer to Dolly, who, by Mrs. McCurry's request, was endeavouring to induce her aunt to come at once to the table, where a tempting meal awaited them.

"I know, my dearie, we shall have your aunt ill again,



if we don't look well after her. She is so weak still, and this excitement is telling upon her."

Then Pranks, at the request of Aunt Charlotte, went to get his breakfast, and the three sat down to theirs, the invalid being waited upon assiduously by her good attendant. What ever would have become of Aunt Charlotte at this time without this faithful nurse and companion it is impossible to say. By a most fortunate coincidence, that very day Mr. Fairbairn came down to visit them. Peter was still in the house, and at once his tale had to be repeated to this good friend. Mr. Fairbairn proposed off hand to go with Pranks to Nettingly—to find out the man, and prevail on him to tell all he knew. Aunt Charlotte announced her intention of accompanying them. She was at once opposed.

"It would be just madness, indeed, sir," said Mrs. McCurry quietly to Mr. Fairbairn; "the poor dear lady is as weak as can be, though certainly on the mend. But I wouldn't answer for the consequences."

"It must not be thought of," returned Mr. Fairbairn decidedly.

Little thinking what was the subject of their discussion, Aunt Charlotte came up to Mrs. McCurry.

"You will go with us?" she said.

"Indeed, no, ma'am; I will go on no such errand," said the good nurse.

"You will not come with me," exclaimed the poor lady amazed.

"No, no, indeed," put in Mr. Fairbairn.

"You must not think of it, Miss Winwood, I can travel more quickly. I can get at these men more easily,

and find far better opportunities of talking to them than you can."

Then Dolly added her persuasions, but for some time in vain. Aunt Charlotte was so sure no one could have the matter so deeply at heart as herself.

"If you wish to do the best thing for the object we all have in view," said Mr. Fairbairn, "you will stay quietly here, and get strong as fast as you can. I promise we will send you news of all we do, or can hear, every day."

So Aunt Charlotte yielded, and the good friend set off with Peter Pranks to go to Nettingly.

It was arranged that the pedlar should not appear at all in the matter. He described the man, told Mr. Fairbairn the place where he was likely to be found, and that gentleman was not long in finding him, and in directing the course of a conversation he started.

"Yes, sir," the fisherman said, in reply to a question put by Mr. Fairbairn, "It was a queer thing about that dog. He followed me for at least three miles along the beach, when I was coming back, after carrying fish up to the town. I thought he was astray, and gave him some food and water. He wouldn't eat anything, but laid down as if he was on the watch like. My mate put a bit of rope through his collar, and tied him up to the boat, for we thought he must be lost, and if any inquiries were made there he'd be. But the second day, when we went down to the boat, the creature was gone. He'd bit the rope through, and the queerest thing was that he'd scraped and clawed over a whole heap of muck and rubbish, and carried away a boot—a boy's boot, as I had picked up on the beach below the cliff, four miles along coast."

who might now be also a  
cold water, or a kindly ha

"Are you hungry?" sh

"No," the man shook h  
low voice. "My heart is  
was dying. I ran away



deserter, they say.  
mother will die all s

His head sank f  
moment the two  
and beckoned to

Only two days after this announcement had been made by the captain, sickness broke out among the sailors.

Three of the best men died. Their bodies were sewn up in sailcloth, with a heavy weight at the feet, and so they were buried in the sea. Several more lay sick and useless. Hands were wanting for the working of the vessel. The pumps could not have been worked, but for the services of the passengers, who did their best; but the leak widened—the water gained, gradually but surely.

There was clearly now no hope for the ship. To remain on board was to meet certain death.

With the boats there might be a chance—nay, two. They were now within a few leagues of a group of islands, on which, could they be reached by the boats, there would be a possibility of finding the means of living until some passing ship should touch there, and so rescue them. There was, besides, the probability that, by slightly altering their course, they should soon fall in with some vessels which, at this season of the year especially, they knew would be on this track. All this was explained by the captain, who throughout had maintained a brave and hopeful aspect, which sustained the courage of all around him. So the boats were lowered and got ready. Supplies of provisions were distributed alike in each, with such few necessaries as the space allowed. First, the ladies were placed in the two larger boats, together with their own relatives, husbands, brothers, or fathers. The crew, many of them scarcely able to move through illness, were next lowered to their places; and, lastly, the chief officer and captain. The very last to quit the *Caprice* was her captain. He would fain have stayed in his ship to the

very end; and have gone down with the vessel which had served them so gallantly, and done its best, till crippled and defeated by the cruel storm; but he knew his life was valuable to those who were in his charge. So he took his position in the largest boat, which would lead the way and take the command of the small fleet of three.

And now the word was given to steer clear of the ship, and to give her a wide berth as quickly as possible.

The pumps being deserted, the water rapidly rushed in, and soon the ship began to fill. She sank steadily and slowly before their eyes: the waters gurgled and whirled in the eddy. Had the boats not been at a safe distance they would have quickly been sucked in and swallowed up.

The men rested on their oars. More and more quickly sank the doomed vessel, and louder and faster whirled the waves around her. Then she disappeared beneath them, the sea settled quietly over her, and that was the last ever seen of the poor *Caprice*. A sigh went round from boat to boat. There were tears in the eyes of the captain, and it was in a hoarse voice he commanded the men to take up their oars. A good captain loves his ship like a child or a dear friend, and this one had done her duty bravely. So now they were out in three open boats upon the wide sea. The sky was clear; the waters smooth and calm as a lake. There was not a breath of wind. One faint breeze would now have served them, as they might have hoisted a sail. But it was not to be had, and the oars were all they could trust to. The three boats were commanded by the captain, the chief officer, and the mate. In the last—the smallest boat—was also Harty Winwood. For the first two days all seemed to go well.

The weather was fine, and the boats kept together. Hope was busy among them, for they made tolerable way. But soon the constant use of the oars began to tell upon the men, who were, many of them, beginning to feel the approach of that illness which had carried off their comrades. Two more of the sick died, and were thrown overboard. The provisions began to run short, and there were no signs of any ship. Then the captain determined on making for the islands, which he knew were not far off, and where at least shelter for the ladies and some kind of sustenance must be ensured. They altered their course, and on the evening of the third day they came in sight of the islands. That day the weather had been threatening, and the boats' companies had been thankful they were to make land, and be at least no longer at the mercy of the elements. But in the night the wind sprang up; the sky was overcast. It blew a gale. When morning came the smaller boat found itself far out at sea. No sight of land or of the other boats, and with no certainty of its own whereabouts. They had no compass, and their stock of provisions consisted only of a few biscuits. Being in company, they had depended for stores on the larger boats, which had more room. In this one were the mate, five sailors, and Harty. Two of the men were too ill to row. In this terrible plight, when despair might well have seized upon the stoutest heart, it was good to see how the brave spirit of the boy rose. He had passed through so many trials and dangers, that he had learned to have faith, and be trustful. He did all he could to comfort the sick men and cheer the others.

"The wind went down as the sun rose," he said; "that's a good sign."

And truly the gale had lessened, but now the rain poured down.

"That is a blessing anyway," said Harty, "for we wanted fresh water."

The mate started, and the men looked at each other. This was the most dreadful blow of all. There was but one small jar of water in the boat. They spread their clothes to catch the rain as it fell; then they wrung out the water so obtained, and stored it for future use. The wind lessened; they were able to set a small sail, and so spare their arms from rowing. The next day one of the two poor sick fellows died, in the night the other followed. They were wrapped in an old sail, and launched into the sea. Night and day how they prayed to meet with a ship. The wind fell, the sky cleared. The sun shone, but alas! the food was nearly gone, and the water was dealt out in drops. And now, when all was so terrible, came even worse. One of the sailors found a bottle, with rum, in the boat. Reckless with despair, he drank largely of it, and became mad. He fought with his messmates, and in the struggle he fell with another into the sea, and both were drowned! There were now left in the boat only the mate, with another sailor, and the boy. Three biscuits remained, and but a pint of water. That night the sky was so blue, the stars shone out with such brightness, the sea stretched like a mirror all around. Not a sound, but the gentle lapping of the waters against the boat's side, was to be heard.

Suddenly a man's voice broke out into a hymn. It was strange, wild, but very sweet. It was the young sailor. When he ceased singing he began to talk in a low voice.

"We are near home now," he said, "I see them all; there is mother, and little Jane, and the old house. ↑

wish I had told them we were coming, but it's church time, and I know where—where—to—find."

The voice died away. All was still. Harty touched the mate upon the hand. The man whispered to him,—

"He's wandering, poor fellow. He is going fast. He was a good lad, but he ran away from home. It has always preyed on his mind."

There was no more said. The poor young sailor ceased to breathe.

"He is better off," said the mate, as he laid a sail over the dead man.

Morning broke and found the boat motionless upon a sea like glass. The mate and Harty alone were now left.

The day passed on. The sun shone brightly. The night came and the moon rose. Both were too weak now to use an oar. The water was nearly finished; there remained one biscuit. They shared the half of this—they took each a spoonful of water. They sat and looked death in the face. When that biscuit and that drop of water were done, the end must come. Sometimes they spoke of their companions, and wondered if they had reached the islands. But speech soon became painful, and they ceased to talk. The mate managed to hoist a sail, and made shift to screen Harty from the sun's rays, which beat pitilessly upon them. The boy was thinking—thinking—how the end of all his wanderings was very near. That hour of ill-temper and disobedience, long ago, had led to a terrible termination.

We may imagine his thoughts!

The mate had long felt the sickness creeping over him from which the others had perished. But he made efforts to rouse himself, and to the last spoke cheerfully, for the



boy's sake. Now came a faintness creeping over Harty. He sank down against his companion, and his eyes closed. The mate looked down at the pale, shrunken face and white lips of the boy. He lifted him as well as he could in his weak arms.

"Poor lad! poor lad! He was a brave fellow, and an honourable one too. He didn't deserve to go like this."

Then the mate looked at the half biscuit and the drop of water.

"It's no good sharing that morsel," he muttered. "It might keep the life in one of us, and one never knows what may happen."

He stretched out his hand to the biscuit—then he hesitated.

"Life is sweet. I'd like to see my old place again. He is past suffering now! But there—there, didn't I swear I'd do him a good turn, and I *will*!"

The mate broke the biscuit and fed the boy, who ate it eagerly. Then he held the last drop of water to the poor white lips. Harty swallowed it.

"That's over!" muttered the mate. It was his last effort. He fell back. The insensible figure of the man, and the dying boy, lay in the boat, as it drifted silently on the sea that was smooth as glass.





## CHAPTER XXIV.

“I SAW HIM DIE!”

WHEN Dolly hastened to her aunt's room, eager to tell her of the wonderful recovery of the musical box, she found Aunt Charlotte in a state of great excitement. Since her illness she had not come down to breakfast, and now Dolly found her dressing hurriedly, with the assistance of Mrs. McCurry. Indeed, that good woman could not move quickly enough, so great was the impatience of the lady.

“What is it?” asked Dolly, quite forgetting her own news in seeing her aunt's eager hurry.

“Pranks is here!” exclaimed Aunt Charlotte, as she hastily buttoned her dress awry, and Mrs. McCurry in vain endeavoured to set it right.

“Never mind! never mind!” cried the lady. “Pray give me my shoes and my cap! Oh! be quick, my dear! be quick!”

Dolly was hurrying with the shoes, the nurse with the cap. In her haste, it was a wonder Aunt Charlotte did not put the shoe on her head, or attempt fitting the cap on her foot.

“More haste worse speed,” said the good-natured

woman who was assisting her. "You would be ready sooner, ma'am, if you would only let me."

"He has news of Harty!—news of our dear boy, my child!" said her aunt to Dolly.

"Good news, he hopes, miss!—at least he said he thought it would lead to something."

"Thank you! thank you!" cried poor Aunt Charlotte, in her haste snatching her apron, instead of a pocket-handkerchief, which Mrs. McCurry was handing to her.

Away went Dolly, closely following her aunt. Sure enough, in their sitting-room, awaiting them, there was the pedlar, Peter Pranks. Bannock had found out his old friend, and sat in silent delight, with his head resting on Peter's knee, and lolling his tongue, foolish enough, at least in looks. In thought and deed a dog is wise at times. Pranks did not keep them long in suspense.

"The fact is, ma'am," he said, "it is a man I met with in Nettingly, where I came through, and, resting one evening at a bit of a public there, I heard some talk. It began about dogs." Peter stroked Bannock's head as he spoke.

"I told an anecdote or two of my own experience with the creatures, and that drew them out, and after a bit this man—he was a fisherman, as most of them were—began about a big black dog that had come to their village, followed him, he said, all of a sudden, and then disappeared as suddenly. From what he said, I guessed pretty surely it was Bannock."

The dog looked up quite knowingly in the old man's face, and began licking his hand, just as if to say, "Yes, that was I; all right."

"Well, well!" said Aunt Charlotte.

"Well, ma'am," Peter continued, "I found out enough to be certain that it was your dog that had followed this man; that they had tried to keep him; but that the creature had broke loose the first chance, and took himself off again. If you remember, he had a piece of rope round his neck when he came back."

"Of course, of course!" agreed Aunt Charlotte.

"Well, from that it went on," continued the pedlar, "and I learned by degrees, for I didn't like to question too closely—you'll see why—I learned that Master Harty, or some one very much like him, was carried off by some seafaring men, and put aboard of a trading vessel that stood off not a mile from Nettingly."

Aunt Charlotte clasped her hands. Dolly opened her mouth to speak. Peter held up his hand.

"Now, you see, ma'am, how it was. I thought to myself, whosoever did carry him off—supposing it was your young gentleman—was doing wrong, and they knew it; and whosoever should let on in any way about it would know they were likely to get them into trouble that did so. So the moment I'd have begun asking questions, they would have shut up close, and no more to be learned, and have put them on their guard besides. I hadn't the right, you see, ma'am, and they would know that. But if any one—like yourself, say, or Mr. Fairbairn—belonging to the lad were to go straight to him, asking the questions direct, I think they would get at something."

"Oh! yes, Peter—yes, you are right," said Aunt Charlotte. "I will go at once. You will tell me the name of the man—where is he to be found?"

"As to his name, I don't know it," returned Pranks. "He'll be found safe enough, where his boat lies, at Nettingly. He shares it with another man."

"But the reward, Pranks—the reward? If these men know anything, surely the description—the reward offered—would have brought them forward?"

"Begging your pardon, ma'am, I don't think so," returned the pedlar. "You see, they have their living. They don't hanker after money, seeing they have all they want, and wouldn't know the use of more. And they would have a dread of getting any one into trouble, and of being mixed up with the law maybe; and all that would keep them quiet, even if they could put things together to make it out clear."

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"That is true, ma'am," said Peter; "but they wouldn't know the whole rights of the story, and it don't strike them, I daresay, that a sea life is anything of a hardship. However, I brought you the news, such as it is, right off, for I knew you could act upon it better than I."

"I can never thank you enough, Pranks!" cried Aunt Charlotte. "I must send to Mr. Fairbairn—he will help me; for I fear I am not strong enough to act alone. But no time shall be lost. Yes, my dear! I will come to breakfast."

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"It would be just madness, indeed, sir," said Mrs. McCurry quietly to Mr. Fairbairn; "the poor dear lady is as weak as can be, though certainly on the mend. But I wouldn't answer for the consequences."

"It must not be thought of," returned Mr. Fairbairn decidedly.

Little thinking what was the subject of their discussion, Aunt Charlotte came up to Mrs. McCurry.

"Yon will go with us?" she said.

"Indeed, no, ma'am; I will go on no such errand," said the good nurse.

"You will not come with me," exclaimed the poor lady amazed.

"No, no, indeed," put in Mr. Fairbairn.

"You must not think of it, Miss Winwood, I can travel more quickly. I can get at these men more easily,

and find far better opportunities of talking to them than you can."

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It was arranged that the pedlar should not appear at all in the matter. He described the man, told Mr. Fairbairn the place where he was likely to be found, and that gentleman was not long in finding him, and in directing the course of a conversation he started.

"Yes, sir," the fisherman said, in reply to a question put by Mr. Fairbairn, "It was a queer thing about that dog. He followed me for at least three miles along the beach, when I was coming back, after carrying fish up to the town. I thought he was astray, and gave him some food and water. He wouldn't eat anything, but laid down as if he was on the watch like. My mate put a bit of rope through his collar, and tied him up to the boat, for we thought he must be lost, and if any inquiries were made there he'd be. But the second day, when we went down to the boat, the creature was gone. He'd bit the rope through, and the queerest thing was that he'd scraped and clawed over a whole heap of muck and rubbish, and carried away a boot—a boy's boot, as I had picked up on the beach below the cliff, four miles along coast."

A sudden light came into Mr. Fairbairn's mind.

"Did it never strike you that it was that very boot you were carrying which caused the dog to follow you?" he said.



"Well, well, now," replied the man, with a wondering expression, "believe me, sir, it never did! I thought no harm of bringing away the boot. It were no good to me, any more than a bit of leather is at all times handy; but there, who'd have thought it?"

"I may as well be plain with you," said Mr. Fairbairn. "There has

been a sad disappearance of a young lad, along the coast hereabouts. A large reward has been offered. Some rumours have been heard of his being carried off."

The fisherman knitted his brows and scratched his head.

"I know naught about it," he said doggedly. "I want no blood-money, and I ain't a spy. I know naught! I'll be mixed up in naught!"

"No one wishes your name to be mixed up. You had of course no hand in his disappearance."

"Me?" cried the fisherman sulkily. "I've boys enough o' my own, and to spare."

"Then you might, I should think, have some feeling



for the parents who have lost their only one," said the gentleman.

The man turned away; there was evidently no more to be got out of him. Mr. Fairbairn quitted the spot, with the feeling that although he had in fact learned little, still something remained which had yet to be discovered; and that he was in the neighbourhood for discovery he felt convinced. He returned to the house where he had left Peter Pranks. The pedlar had been strolling to and fro in his usual careless way, and had picked up a few scraps of information, which he now proceeded to give Mr. Fairbairn.

"I find, sir," he said, "that there are two or three sailors down here, who have just returned from a cruise. They are visiting friends in the village; their place of meeting is the alehouse yonder. From what I have heard it strikes me we may learn something by going round there to-night, if you don't mind making yourself a bit common-looking as it were."

Mr. Fairbairn at once agreed, and that night when the small room at the alehouse was pretty well filled with men, smoking and drinking their moderate allowance; the pedlar and the gentleman quietly walked in and took their seats in a corner where they were not noticed.

There was not much difference in their appearance now, at least so far as dress went. How Mr. Fairbairn had accomplished it I cannot say, but he had certainly given himself a "common" sort of look. They called for drink and pipes, like the rest; and, like them, soon became engaged in listening to the yarn of a rough seaman, who was retailing adventures of a truly wonderful nature.

There was nothing to interest our friends in this, for

some time, but when a slight pause came, a gruff voice was heard to say, "Tell 'em about the savages, Bill, how they fell upon us at Benty's Island."

"Ah! that was a go! My pipe! but there was a shindy and no mistake!"

"Tell us." "Go on," cried several.

The narrator went on,—

"We'd been ashore for water. A youngster we had with us got into a scrape, and nothing would suit our capt'n but we must go back for him. As we came down shore the black niggers fell upon us, tooth and nail, about five hundred strong. We had a rare scrimmage—killed half of 'em. They shot us with poisoned arrows."

"Was any of your men killed?" asked one of the listeners.

"One! Two or three were hurt, and both the youngsters."

Here Peter gripped Mr. Fairbairn's arm tightly, for that gentleman had started, as though about to speak.

"I was sorry for that lad as we lost. Not Sam, I don't mean, he was a rare cub—but the other. Him as Larcom and Hawkins brought aboard." This was put in by the gruff voice which had before spoken.

"Ay," continued the first speaker, "they did say as he was a real gentleman's son—he had the look of it." Then the talk went off to other matters. Mr. Fairbairn rose to quit the place—Peter Pranks followed. When they were outside the gentleman said hurriedly,—

"This is terrible! but still I see nothing to make it certain that the boy they speak of was Mr. Winwood's son."

"No, sir," said Pranks slowly, "there is nothing certain

so far; but, perhaps, if you could speak to this man, you might learn more."

They waited till the party broke up and left the house. Quietly following the two seamen, who had parted from the rest, Mr. Fairbairn came up with them.

"My friend," he said, "I heard you just now relate your adventure with the savages, at Benty's Island. Do you happen to remember the name of the poor lad that was killed?" The one called Bill did not answer directly, but he with the gruff voice said,—

"His name was Sam. He was the cabin-boy, and as arrant a young rogue—"

"But there was another?" said the gentleman.

"Oh! he was the foundling, as we called him," laughed Bill. "He was a gentleman's son, they said."

"Do you remember his name?"

"Well, it was something like Wormwood, or similar, I know."

"And he was killed?" pursued the questioner.

"I saw him with my own eyes; so did my messmate here."

"Ay, we saw him go down, sure enough."

"What was the name of your ship?"

"It was the *Caroline*, trading vessel; masters, Hawkins and Sims," returned the man.

"Has she sailed again?"

"Well, master, she didn't come to England; she went along down the Mediterranean shores. We—my mate and I—got tired of the craft, and changed into a Scotch boat, and so worked home."

"You can tell me no more about this lad, whom you saw killed?"

"No, master; I know nothing more. It was Hawkins and Larcom brought him aboard, and they are with the *Caroline*. All I know is, I saw the youngster go down, shot dead with one of the blackamoor's arrows."

The men bade Mr. Fairbairn good night. He could learn no more; he had, indeed, learned too much. This was the news he had to take to the expecting aunt and loving little sister on the morrow! He took leave of Peter Pranks, who went his way, sorrowing for his own share in the terrible discovery. Better, he thought, it would have been to remain in uncertainty. Mr. Fairbairn reached the house on the morrow, where Aunt Charlotte and Dolly awaited him. His sad face and slow step told of bad tidings. The poor lady rose hastily, and with parched lips and trembling limbs met him at the door.

"What is it?" she cried. "Bad—bad news! I see it!"

Mr. Fairbairn held out his hands and took hers.

"Be comforted," he said, "be brave. Dolly, my child! come sit by your aunt—"

"Tell me! tell me the truth!" cried Aunt Charlotte. "Harty is dead!"

Mr. Fairbairn shook his head.

At that moment a servant came hastily into the room.

"Ma'am," she said eagerly, "they bade me tell you the *Bonny Blink* is signalled. She is in the Channel."

"My father and mother!" exclaimed Dolly, starting to her feet.

"It is their ship! They will soon be here!"



## CHAPTER XXV.

### ON BOARD THE "BONNY BLINK."

GLOWING skies, a sea like glass, or a smooth lake, reflecting the blue sky overhead. A noble ship, with colours flying, music sounding, and the gentle breeze lightly fanning her sails, set for "Home, sweet home!"

"Let us have it again!"

"And again!"

It is the tune, "Home, sweet home!" Twenty times it has been played in these last few days, yet they never weary of listening to, of singing it. Their very hearts seem to dance to it.

"Home, sweet, sweet home,  
There is no place like home!"

Who can realize it so well as these homesick travellers—these returning wanderers from a foreign land? How many pictures their fond memories are painting in anticipation! To some the old homestead, with the grey-haired parent, and the hundred recollections of youth. To others the anxious wife, the infant their eyes have

never yet beheld. And again, to some, the beloved brothers and sisters, whom years will have converted from boys and girls into men and women. Two anxious, loving hearts are yearning now with glad anticipations, with anxious hopes and surmises filling their breasts.

"It seems like years since I heard from them," says the lady—a fair, sweet-faced woman, whom you could not have looked upon without recalling Dolly Winwood.

"It is a long time, you know, my dear," replies the gentleman beside her. "We had told Charlotte to send no more letters, you know, and then the delay, of course, made the time double."

"Of course! How strange it is!" she went on; "as we draw nearer home I seem to have a dread as of some evil happening. I wonder how I have borne to be away from them all these years. Never again, never again, shall anything part us!"

"Never again, my dear wife—never again in this world, I trust."

"How sweet the air is! I seem to smell English flowers!"

He smiled.

"At any rate, it is an English sun, or you would long ago have had a sunstroke, standing here with that cambric hat only on your head."

"I do so long to catch a glimpse of home."

They turned again to walk. The band was still playing.

"The music is English too," said the lady. "No one would have dared play that out yonder." She waved her hand out upon the sea.

"It would have broken our hearts. 'Home, sweet, sweet home!'"

"I wish we had asked Charlotte to bring them to Southampton," said the gentleman.

"Indeed, yes! What joy to meet them—to see the dear faces! I should know them anywhere!"

"And Dolly such a baby?" said her husband. "Are you reckoning on having a little poppet to dandle?"

"No, no; but I can picture exactly what she has grown. As for Harold, I know he will be your image."

"Not at any rate by inches, it is to be hoped," he said, and laughed.

As the gentleman measured something like six feet, we may suppose this was not what the fond mother anticipated.

"He will be tall, though," she persisted.

"No doubt; he will take after his mother."

"No, no!" cried the lady, who was not certainly remarkable for height.

"You could paint a portrait of our boy, doubtless, from anticipation, but whether correct or not is another thing."

"Ah! it will not be long now, yet the hours seem days," she said.

"No, not long now," her husband repeated. Then he said, "What is the attraction, I wonder, yonder?"

A crowd had gathered at one end of the deck. A glass was being handed from one spectator to another.

Mr. and Mrs. Winwood drew near, carelessly wondering what it could be.

"As far as we can make out," replied some one, in answer to the former's question, "it is a boat with some

persons in it. But it is drifting, and they are either asleep, or drunk, or something."

"Something wrong anyway," said another. "Does the captain know? Is he going to send off?"

"Perhaps it is as well not," growled a selfish, old, rich Indian near. "Likely as not some case of infectious fever. I never knew any good come of such meddling."

"If you, sir, happened to be one of the unfortunate creatures in the boat, your opinion would be different, I doubt," said Mr. Winwood hotly.

"It is not as if they had signalled us, or seemed to need help," retorted the growler.

"They may be past asking for it, yet need assistance," maintained the other.

"There is no life stirring there, Mr. Winwood, sir,—take my word for it," said the man, who had been looking through the glass, as he closed it with a bang; and so settled the question. And the little boat went drifting on the smooth sea.

"There is but one man that I can see, and a boy," said one of the lookers-on.

"A boy!" Mrs. Winwood pushed gently forward. "It is a boy!" she exclaimed. "Oh! Harold, can nothing be done?"

She looked up, expecting to see her husband, and found beside her the captain, whom Mr. Winwood had fetched. They were old friends.

"There is death there, my dear lady," he said; "the end of much suffering, I fear. Fever and starvation probably."

"You will see?" she urged.



"They are lowering a boat," said Mr. Winwood hurriedly. "I am going with them."

"You, dear?"

"Yes." If there had been any objection present in the lady's mind, she would not have urged it, when her husband spoke in that tone of decision. He must have good reasons, she knew. As he passed her he said in a low voice,—

"Sailors are not always the most quick of perception. You know, Dorothy, there may be a life to be saved, dear."

She nodded, and went away to her cabin, for she dreaded a painful sight, perhaps, if the poor sufferers were indeed past hope.

A short time passed, then Mrs. Winwood heard quick movements overhead, and voices speaking in tones of pity; some giving orders, some advising.



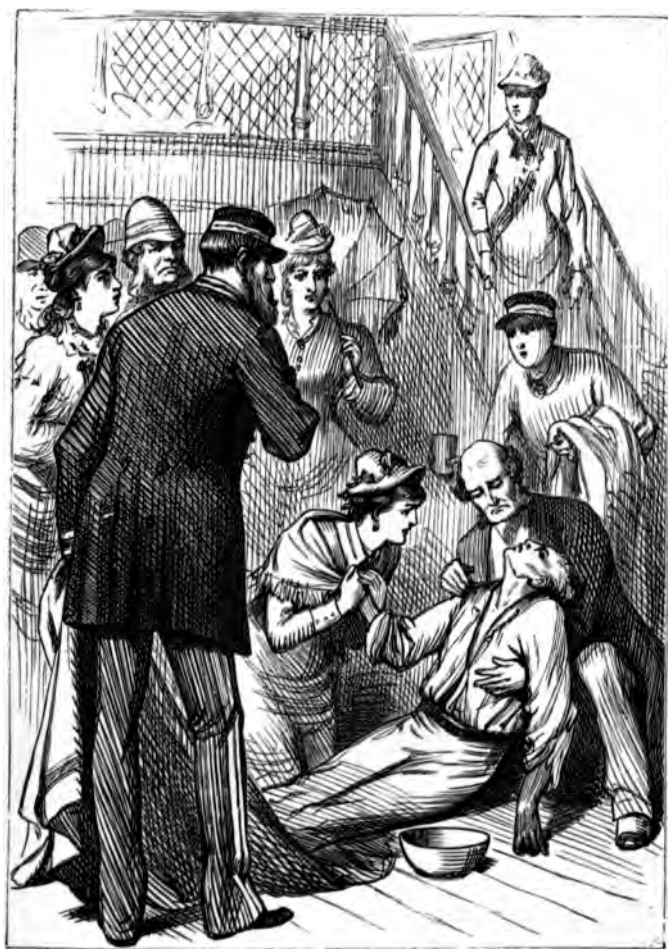
She put a question to the woman who waited on the ladies.

"It is the boat come back, ma'am. They have brought one of the poor fellows. They say he isn't dead."

Mrs. Winwood went out quickly and joined the group, in the midst of which knelt her husband, supporting on his knee the head of a lad, in whose pallid face, and blue, shrunken lips, 'death seemed plainly written. Some brandy had been inserted between his lips. One sailor was chafing his hands, another was drawing off the drenched shoes and stockings. As the shrivelled blue feet became visible a shudder ran round the group. More than one lady turned horrified away. But Mrs. Winwood ran swiftly to her cabin, and returned with a large piece of flannel, warm and soft.

"Wrap this round them," she cried, and, suiting the action to the word, she knelt down and rolled the boy's feet up, deftly chafing them with her own warm hands as she did so. At the same time another spoonful of brandy was poured down his throat. Suddenly a slight shiver ran through the frame of the lad. He opened his eyes, and while a wan, waking smile flitted over his face he said faintly, "Aunt—Charlotte—Dolly."

Mrs. Winwood sprang to her feet, and gazed at the boy, then at her husband, who in his turn was trembling, as he bent over the pallid face, and seemed hungrily listening for another word. But Harty was again insensible. Then he was carried into Mr. Winwood's own cabin, where the doctor came to him. He rendered all the aid possible, but he said that so much privation had



"BUT HARTY WAS AGAIN INSENSIBLE."

strong. When he came on deck, leaning on his father's arm, holding his mother's hand, there needed no introduction to tell who the rescued boy was. The passengers, friends of the voyage, who crowded round to congratulate them, had but to look from the face of father to son. It was as his mother had said, the one was a reflection of the other, except that Mr. Winwood's bronzed face contrasted with poor Harty's pinched and colourless cheeks. Home was now in sight. Boats came off bringing papers, messages, friends impatient to meet dear ones. Some one was heard inquiring for Mr. Winwood. That gentleman stepped forward. Harty was with his mother. It was Mr. Fairbairn who spoke.

"I am sent, sir, by your sister, Miss Winwood, to say that bad news awaits you. She has been very ill. She is now far from strong, and she wished the tidings to reach you first."

"I think I can guess what it is," said Harty's father, with a smile, at which Mr. Fairbairn stared in wonder. "My son is found, thank God!" said Mr. Winwood; and then Harty was called, and recognized his old friend, and hurriedly the tale of the rescue was told.

Now came the bustle of landing. Mr. Fairbairn had told them that Aunt Charlotte and Dolly would meet them. In the crowd and confusion it was not easy to distinguish friends, but suddenly Mr. Winwood felt his hands grasped, and, with a face of woe, poor Aunt Charlotte looked up at him.

"Oh! brother, forgive me!" It was all she could say. Dolly, looking anxiously around, was caught up in a pair

of loving arms. Poor child ! she could but cry for joy and sorrow together, and say, "Oh ! mother, if Harty were but here !"

"Who is this, then, darling ?" said her mother, as she drew Harty forward.

And then, between father and brother, Dolly was lost in loving caresses. Poor Aunt Charlotte recovered on the spot. Her joy was the best doctor. What happiness ! what welcoming ! what questions ! what heartfelt thanksgiving that their lost wanderer was found ! Bannock was not last or least in his noisy congratulations. He sprang upon Harty, as though he would have devoured him for joy ; then raced round and round everybody, and barked, and took tremendous gallops to and fro, and in short raised a glad commotion, which no one felt inclined to check. Good Mrs. McCurry was there ; and, as she had shared their troubles, she now shared their joy.


"I don't know what we should have done without her," said Aunt Charlotte, when she had told Dolly's mother something about her kind nurse.

"She must come with us to Sherway," said Mrs. Winwood. "We are all going to be very happy there, and want all friends about us."

"I mean that you should stay with me always, if you will," said Aunt Charlotte, as she took the hand of the good woman.

"How glad Pranks will be," cried Dolly, "to know we have found dear Harty ! But I shall not care for his stories ever again."

"Harty will have tales of adventure for you, my love,



firmly convinced of one thing, in which I hope my readers  
will agree, that "there is no place like home."

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# CONTENTS.

	PAGE
New Works and New Editions, 1877—78 ... ..	3
Miscellaneous Books ... ..	8
Stanesby's Illuminated Gift Books ... ..	10
Works by John Timbs, F.S.A. ... ..	10
Picture Books for Every Child ... ..	10
Six Shilling Books ... ..	11
Five Shilling Books ... ..	11
Four and Sixpenny Books ... ..	13
Three and Sixpenny Books ... ..	14
Three Shilling Books ... ..	19
Two and Sixpenny Books ... ..	20
Comical Picture Books ... ..	23
Two Shilling Books ... ..	23
One and Sixpenny Books ... ..	25
The Favourite Library ... ..	26
Durable Nursery Books ... ..	27
Works for Distribution ... ..	28
Educational Works ... ..	28
Needlework Demonstration Sheets ... ..	31
Darnell's Copy Books ... ..	32
Taking Tales for Cottage Homes ... ..	32



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